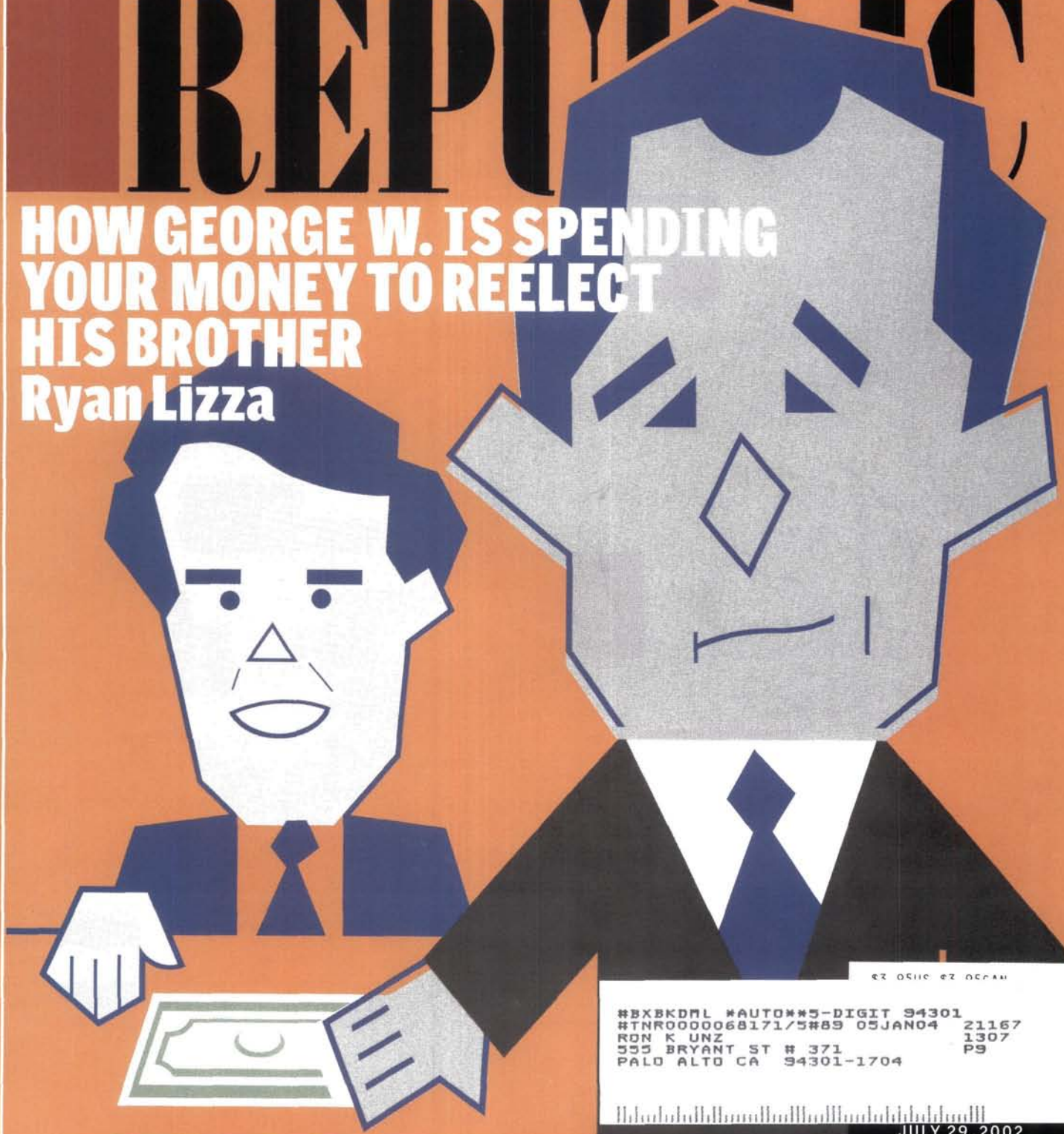
WHY FOREIGN AID WORKS Gregg Easterbrook

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE ONGOING SIX DAY WAR
Tony Judt

THE NEW DEMOCRAT SELLOUT
The Editors

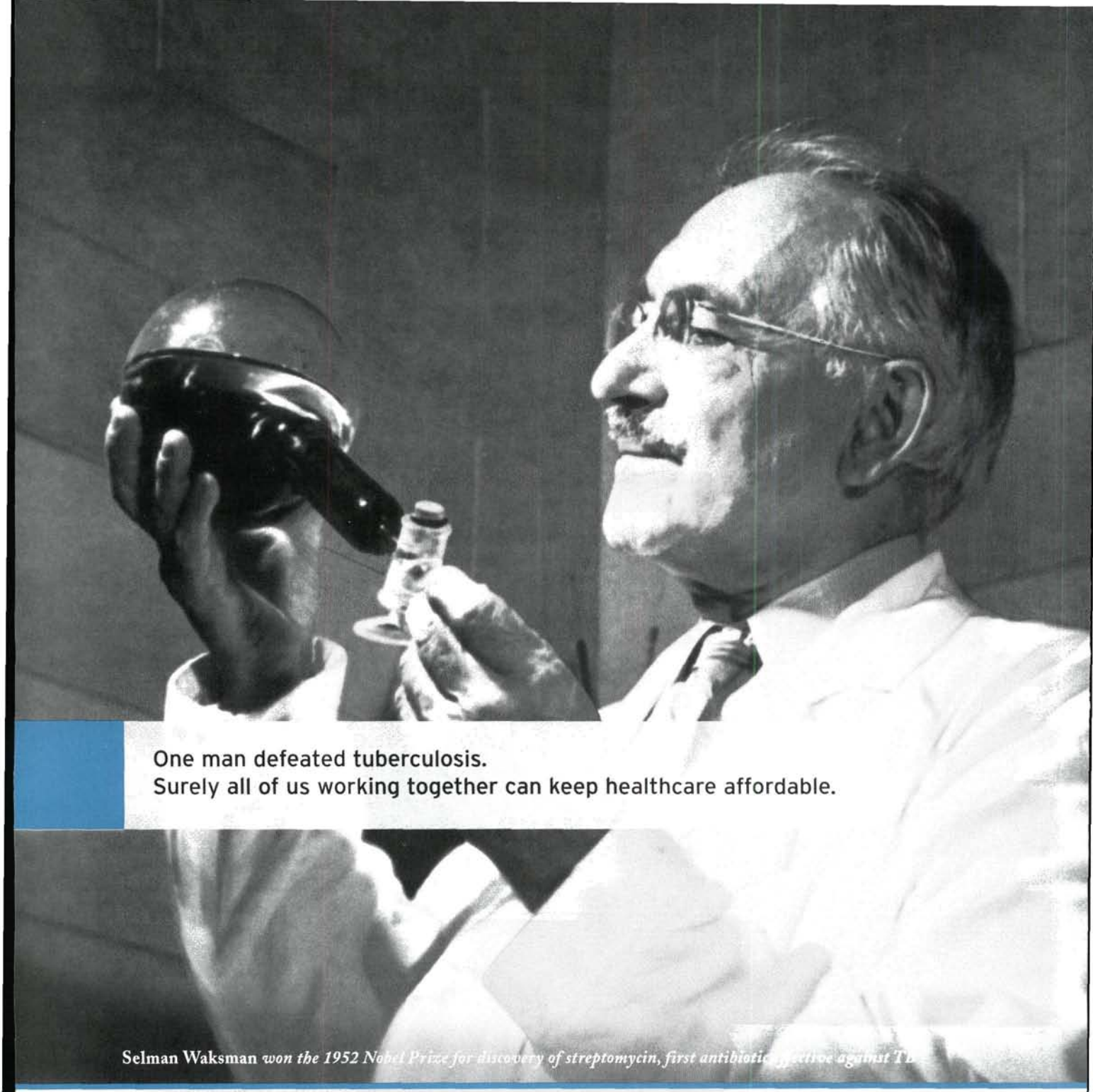
HOW GEORGE W. IS SPENDING YOUR MONEY TO REELECT HIS BROTHER
Ryan Lizza



#BXBKDML *AUTO**5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR0000068171/5#89 05JAN04 21167
RON K UNZ 1307
555 BRYANT ST # 371 P9
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

JULY 29, 2002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



One man defeated tuberculosis.
Surely all of us working together can keep healthcare affordable.

Selman Waksman *won the 1952 Nobel Prize for discovery of streptomycin, first antibiotic effective against TB.*

Insurers. Drug companies. Hospitals. Physicians. Lawmakers. Employers. Consumers. We all need to work together to keep healthcare affordable. And right now, the BlueCross BlueShield system is leading the way.

We're funding research to uncover the real drivers of healthcare costs and we'll share what we learn. We've teamed up with the Washington Business Group on Health to launch the Institute for Health Care Costs and Solutions. We're working with others to support legislation so that safe, effective, lower-cost generic drugs get to market when they should.

Because the Blues collectively insure one out of four Americans, we know the size of the challenge. And we know that together, all of us can keep healthcare affordable.

To receive a copy of our research on the drivers of healthcare costs log onto www.bcbs.com.

BlueCross BlueShield Association

An Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
JULY 29, 2002
ISSUE 4,567

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR
PETER BEINART
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
CHRISTOPHER ORR
Senior Editors
JONATHAN CHAIT, JONATHAN COHN, MICHELLE COTTLE, GREGG EASTERBROOK, JOHN B. JUDIS, LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN, ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD
Legal Affairs JEFFREY ROSEN
Managing Editor SARAH BLUSTAIN
Assistant Managing Editor AMANDA FAZZONE
Films: STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater: ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry: GLYN MAXWELL
Art: JED PERL
Architecture: MARTIN FILLER
Dance: JENNIFER HOMANS
The New Republic Online
Assistant Editor CHRISTIANE CULHANE
Director of Business Operations ARI GERSEN
New Republic Books (BASIC BOOKS)
VANESSA MOBLEY
Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, AKHIL REED AMAR, PETER BERKOWITZ, PAUL BERMAN, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANTHONY GRAFTON, DAVID GRANN, YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI, ANN HULBERT, TONY JUDT, ROBERT KAGAN, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, JEREMY MCCARTER, JOHN MCWHORTER, SHERWIN B. NULAND, DAVID RIEFF, MAGGIE SCARF, LEE SIEGEL, RONALD STEEL, CASS R. SUNSTEIN, MARGARET TALBOT, E.V. THAW, HELEN VENDLER, MICHAEL WALZER, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, ROBERT WRIGHT
Contributing Artists
JACK COUGHLIN, VINT LAWRENCE, DAVID SCHORR, TOM TOLES
Associate Editors
MICHAEL CROWLEY, FRANKLIN FOER, RYAN LIZZA, JASON ZENGERLE
Associate Literary Editor RUTH FRANKLIN
Art Direction JOE HEROUN, CHRISTINE CAR/H2C
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production and Information-Technology Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Manager HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
NOAM SCHEIBER, SARAH WILDMAN, SACHA ZIMMERMAN
Assistant to the Editor ASHER PRICE
Assistant Literary Editor ERIN LEIB
Assistant Poetry Editor MELANIE REHAK
Reporter-Researcher
SPENCER ACKERMAN

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
STEPHANIE SANDBERG
General Manager
ANNETTE POCICA
ADVERTISING SALES AND MARKETING
Associate Publisher
ELISE ADDE
Director of Advertising, West
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Advertising, New York
TIM WHITING
Publishing Consultant DAVID NUDO
Consumer Marketing Director PETER GLOVIN
Associate Advertising Manager MEREDITH COSSA
Marketing Assistant ETHAN FISCHER
Business Assistant SAMANTHA SPINNEY
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Acting Controller MICHAEL SOUTHALL
Accounting Assistant VANESSA WILSON
Business Assistant SARA DEGRAEVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chairman ROGER HERTOG
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Do Muslims read Samuel Huntington? &c.

6 **PETER BEINART** TRB: TEST CASE Are vouchers a good idea? No one knows.

7 **THE EDITORS** OPT OUT Stock options and the decline of the New Democrat.

8 **NOTEBOOK** What's oppressing Andy Grove? &c.

10 **JONATHAN CHAIT** PRIVATE SCHOOL Think Harken's a scandal? Look at Bush's budget.

12 **MICHAEL CROWLEY** ON THE HILL: STOCK ANSWER Which Dem do the scandals help?

13 **DOUGLAS STARR** BAD BLOOD How the 9/11 blood donations went down the drain.

16 **GREGG EASTERBROOK** SAFE DEPOSIT Foreign aid hasn't eradicated poverty. It hasn't even consistently promoted economic growth. All it has done is save millions of lives across the world. If only that were enough to win it political support.

20 **RYAN LIZZA** HE AIN'T HEAVY When Bill Clinton did favors for Hillary's Senate campaign in New York, the press howled. But that pales next to what George W. is doing for Jeb in Florida. A guide to how your tax dollars are helping reelect the president's brother.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: SEX AND SELF *Notorious C.H.O.* crackles; *My Wife Is an Actress* fizzes.

27 **TONY JUDT** AFTER VICTORY *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* by Michael B. Oren

34 **ALAN TAYLOR** WORLDS WITHIN WORDS *A Is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* by Jill Lepore

36 **JACQUELYN POPE** POEM *Persephone Descending*

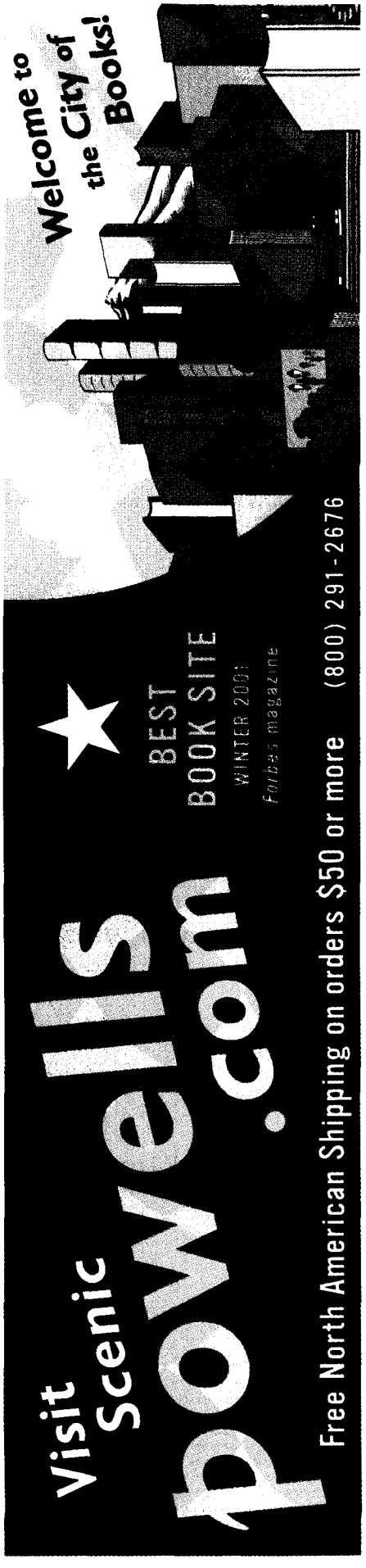
38 **ROBERT BOYERS** STIFLINGS *The Melancholy of Resistance* by László Krasznahorkai, translated by George Szirtes

42 **SARAH BLUSTAIN** WASHINGTON DIARIST: JUST BUY IT

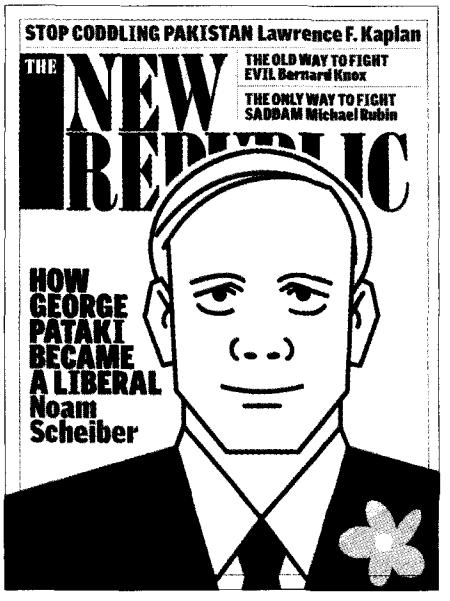
On the Cover : Illustration by STEPHEN SAVAGE
On the Web : www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 227, Number 5, Issue 4,567, July 29, 2002. (Printed in the United States on July 17, 2002.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 4 & 11, April 1 & 8, July 8 & 15, August 5 & 12, August 19 & 26, September 9 & 16, December 2 & 9, and December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Meredith Cossa at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2002 by The New Republic, LLC. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



CORRESPONDENCE


STOP CODDLING PAKISTAN Lawrence F. Kaplan
THE NEW REPUBLIC
THE OLD WAY TO FIGHT EVIL Bernard Knox
THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT SADDAM Michael Rubin
HOW GEORGE PATAKI BECAME A LIBERAL Noam Scheiber

Aisle seat

TO THE EDITORS:

I'm a liberal Democrat who enjoyed Noam Scheiber's article about George Pataki and his move toward becoming a more liberal governor ("Liberal Arts," June 17). I like the liberal Pataki (who helped my town acquire open space) better than the former, conservative Pataki. My concern is what happens after this year's election. If Pataki thinks he has a chance of getting nominated for vice president, will he do a flip-flop and become a conservative again?

PAUL FEINER
Greenburgh Town Supervisor
Greenburgh, New York

Static harmony

TO THE EDITORS:

In his review of James Gavin's *Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker*, David Thomson makes the mistake of confusing the personal and ethical aspects of a performer's life with the artistic ("My Unfunny Valentine," June 17). I've always thought of Baker as the idiot savant of jazz: an untaught, natural genius who had an exceptional ability to extemporaneously compose new melodies, together with an atypical timing that touched the hearts of millions of fans. To criticize what the public inherently loves is amusing to fans who understand that there isn't a jazz artist today who wouldn't love to have the public acceptance that Baker still has.

HARVEY M. ROSENWASSER
Key Biscayne, Florida

Civil dispute

TO THE EDITORS:

Amartya Sen warns us not to "give credibility to the allegedly unique importance of one categorization over all the other ways in which people of the world may be classified" ("Civilizational Imprisonments," June 10). It is absurd, he argues, to suppose "that members of the Islamic civilization have an essentially belligerent culture" and therefore a so-called "clash" of civilizations is "inescapable." Western intellectuals, Sen contends, are "artificially magnifying the voice of religious authority" in the Islamic world when they might instead dwell upon "our right to choose how we see ourselves (with what emphases and what priorities)." The problem, of course, is that the unique importance of religion for many fundamentalist fanatics in the Islamic world is not "alleged" by Western intellectuals but is a fact with consequences we must learn, so far as possible, to deal with. Those consequences include a venomous antipathy toward modernity, secularism, and liberal values—and an attitude of belligerence, which can express itself in terrorist attacks such as those in the United States on 9/11. Most of those who speak of a clash of civilizations do not believe that Islam is "an essentially belligerent culture" or that a clash is "inescapable"; but they note that what appears in the Arab press, what is taught in a great many Islamic schools, and what is more and more frequently done in the name of Islam reflect the outlook of a "religious authority" with a commitment to irrationality, martyrdom, and retributive violence we must acknowledge.

No doubt there are those in the Islamic world—including a relatively small number of secular intellectuals—who are appalled at the ruinous direction their culture has taken; but the voices of these people are rarely heard in their own countries and not very often in the West.

Perhaps Sen has reason to suppose that such persons have some genuine prospect of halting the spread of fanaticism in the Islamic world, but he does not say that in his essay. Neither does he explain why our inalienable right "to choose how we see ourselves" should seem to us encouraging as we observe what has been taking shape in the Islamic world. Ought we not instead observe that the exercise of this right, or liberty, is at present proscribed in many sectors of the Islamic world and that no one is "artificially magnifying" the difficulties likely to confront Islamic dissidents or "free" thinkers unwilling to accept the edicts of religious men? Sen's important reminders that the Islamic world was once the cradle of enormous learning and scientific investigation must not obscure the fact—as noted by Edward W. Said and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

others—that the rise of fundamentalism has taken an enormous toll on the Islamic university and largely destroyed intellectual life in most Islamic countries.

In short, it is not Western intellectuals who have created the crisis to which Sen would seem to be responding. Many here who speak of a clash of civilizations have been eager to note promising signs of resistance to clerical authority in places like Iran and to urge upon the U.S. government a relaxation of hostilities with such countries. Few regard Islam as a monolithic, inescapably adversary system, but we do note that a great many people in the Islamic world are determined to prosecute a conflict with the West. Sen would do well not to imagine that our own belief in "plural identities," as he terms them, is shared by people who by no means define themselves in this way. Such people very often behave as if the diverse features of their identity—as spouses, say, or as the parents of children in whom they have an obligation to instill a respect for their own lives at least—were entirely negligible when set beside their primary responsibility to create a culture of martyrs.

ROBERT BOYERS
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, New York

AMARTYA SEN REPLIES:

I welcome the opportunity to respond to Robert Boyers's reasoned and thoughtful comments on my essay. I must begin by noting that his arguments deal not with the general issues addressed in my essay (including the relevance of internal diversities within, and external interactions between, civilizations) but almost exclusively with the recent conflicts and terrorist activities involving what he calls "the Islamic world." This is fair enough, but I would like to make sure that in the heat of the debates surrounding the very recent conflicts, the general critique of civilizational partitioning and isolationist interpretations is not completely lost.

Indeed, one can illustrate the general problems addressed in my essay with specific reference to the particular points that Boyers makes about the so-called "Islamic world." Of what does this entity called the "Islamic world" consist? Boyers is clearly right to note that there are "many fundamentalist fanatics in the Islamic world" for whom religion has unique importance and who have a "venomous antipathy toward modernity, secularism, and liberal values." Boyers argues that in "the Islamic world" voices in opposition to such extremism are "rarely heard." We have to ask what definition of the Islamic world would make that statement true. Even if we leave out countries with large Islamic populations in which Islamic fundamentalism has little mass support (such as India or Muslim-majority Bangladesh or Indonesia), voices of dissent are hardly silent in countries where Islamic fundamentalism has made major inroads. Consider Pakistan. If Boyers chooses to ignore the principal dailies of Pakistan, such as *Dawn*, *The News*, *The Daily Times*, and *The Nation*, or periodicals like *The Friday Times* and *The Herald*, he may construct a picture of uniformity of the kind that he expects to see, but it would hardly be a fair comment on the Pakistani civil society. (In Pakistan, fundamentalist Islamic parties fare miserably in elections, getting a far tinier fraction of votes than Le Pen gets in French elections.) The same is true in Iran, despite the influence of censorship. This is also reflected in electoral outcomes, when elections are actually held, for example, in Iran.

The presumption of internal uniformity makes the civilizational partitioning an oddly undiscerning way of thinking about conflicts in the world. The battle lines are not drawn the way Boyers takes them to be, and the fault lines do not run along national or civilizational boundaries.

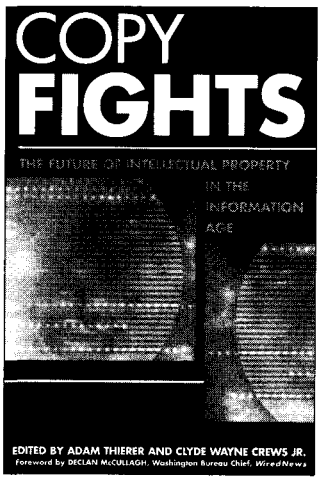
Civilizational partitions suffer not only from the supposition of homogeneity or near homogeneity but also from the presumption of historical isolation or near-isolation, when coupled with the tendency of some theorists to underplay or to ignore the extent to which different countries and civilizations have interacted with each other in the past. The usurpation of the global heritage of science as simply "Western science" not only gives us a very distorted history but also tends to strengthen the voices of fundamentalism as the "true" or "genuine" inheritors of Islamic and other non-Western traditions.

Boyers is right, of course, that "Western intellectuals" have not "created" fundamentalism in non-Western societies (I did not suggest that they had); but parochialism in the civilizational theorizing of global history can contribute substantially to strengthening precisely those tendencies that Boyers complains about. It adds to the influence of bigots in the non-Western world who want, as I wrote, "to focus on those issues that divide them from the West (religious beliefs, local customs, cultural specificities) rather than on those things that reflect global interactions (science, mathematics, literature, and so on)." The "push" of Western parochialism can add to the "pull" of sectarian militancy. ■

CATO INSTITUTE

NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS

CIVIL SOCIETY • INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY • FREE MARKETS • LIMITED GOVERNMENT


COPY
FIGHTS
THE FUTURE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN THE INFORMATION AGE
EDITED BY ADAM THIERER AND CLYDE WAYNE CREWS JR.
Foreword by DECLAN McCULLAGH, Washington Bureau Chief, WiredNews

"The Cato Institute has performed a terrific service for anyone interested in the future of technology. It has assembled a provocative, beguiling, and thoroughly engaging collection of essays on the law and policy of intellectual property."

–Declan McCullagh
Washington Bureau Chief, *Wired News*

Copy Fights: The Future of Intellectual Property in the Information Age
Edited by Adam Thierer and Clyde Wayne Crews Jr.
280 pages
Cloth $19.95 ISBN 1-930865-25-2
Paper $10.95 ISBN 1-930865-24-4

Available at bookstores nationwide • To order call 1-800-767-1241 or visit www.cato.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Test Case

LAST MONTH THE SUPREME Court did something valuable: It made the debate over school choice a debate about education. Before the Court ruled that Cleveland's voucher program didn't violate the separation of church and state, liberals had begun most voucher discussions by declaring the idea unconstitutional—effectively preempting a debate on the educational merits. Now that card is largely off the table, which is a good thing if you believe that in the United States today state establishment of religion is a wholly hypothetical danger and educational failure in the inner city is a clear and present one.

But certain dogmas still cloud the debate. No longer able to call school choice a threat to religious liberty, some liberals are now calling it a threat to national unity. Pronouncing the United States "a pluralistic society that desperately needs institutions to bind us together," *The American Prospect*'s Richard Just recently wrote, "Public schools can and should be the most important of these institutions." The verbs give it away. Maybe public schools "can and should" bring together Americans from all walks of life, but today they don't. Middle-class whites and poor minorities may both attend public schools, but they rarely attend *the same* public schools—and liberals have no realistic strategy for making them do so. In fact, when RAND last year reviewed the social science research on school choice, it found that "[i]n communities where public schools are highly stratified, targeted voucher programs may modestly increase racial integration."

If liberals are blinded by an abstract devotion to social solidarity (whether or not public schools actually provide it), conservatives are blinded by an abstract devotion to choice. In its editorial endorsing the Court's decision, *The Washington Times* wrote, "There is no more American a concept than freedom of choice." George F. Will, who usually denounces the promiscuous expansion of new rights, referred to the "right of school choice." But to call school choice a "right" or a "freedom" suggests it is a good in itself. And it's not. Giving parents more choice over which schools their children attend is no more an inherent good than giving parents more choice over which classes their children take within a school—something conservatives generally oppose. If conservatives really believed school choice was a "right," they'd demand that inner-city parents be able to send their kids to public schools in the suburbs. But they don't, presumably because they think such "choice" would undermine local control, which would undermine the quality of suburban schools. Which is precisely the point. "Choice" has value only if it furthers learning.

The liberal claim that public education is an inherent good, and the conservative claim that the choice to opt out of public education is an inherent good, are both diversions from the only question that matters: Does school choice improve education—for the kids who get vouchers and for those who don't? No one knows the answer to that question today. But one day we will, which makes vouchers that rare issue that could be settled empirically. All it requires is a little intellectual honesty.

The school-choice debate is quite new. The first real voucher initiatives began in the early '90s, and today there are essentially only three: In Milwaukee, where nearly 11,000 students participate; in Cleveland, where almost 5,000 do; and in Florida, where the number is fewer than 50. As a result, there is little clear evidence about how successful school choice has been. A group led by Harvard political scientist Paul E. Peterson found that voucher recipients in Milwaukee improved their test scores in math, but a University of Wisconsin scholar found no such gains. Likewise, Peterson's team found modest test score gains in Cleveland, but University of Indiana researchers disagreed. Surveying all the Milwaukee and Cleveland studies last October, the General Accounting Office said it was impossible to say either that vouchers raised test scores or that they didn't.

Peterson and his colleagues also studied programs in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Dayton in which students were given lottery scholarships to attend private schools. But in this case as well, the results were mixed. In Washington the private school kids didn't outperform their former classmates; in New York and Dayton the African American (but not the Hispanic and white) students did. Jay P. Greene, a scholar at the Manhattan Institute, has tackled a different question. By studying Florida's school-choice program, which awards vouchers to students from failing schools, he has argued that the voucher threat improved the state's public schools. But other academics deny vouchers caused the improvement. Reviewing the school-choice literature last December, RAND concluded that "none of the important empirical questions has been answered definitively."

School choice, then, offers something of a public policy "veil of ignorance." Neither proponents nor opponents really know if it works. Yet unlike the debate over, say, abortion, both sides implicitly acknowledge that such a question can be answered empirically through standardized testing. (If they didn't, they wouldn't argue so vociferously about the meager testing data that exists today.) So why not try a grand experiment? Let the two sides jointly choose a panel of mutually acceptable social scientists. Give the panel some highbrow, nonpartisan affiliation—say, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Give it several years and lots of money to conduct exhaustive studies of every voucher and major lottery scholarship program. And make both sides publicly attest—before they know the results—to the fairness and credibility of its work.

Naïve? Perhaps. The teachers' unions have a vested professional interest in keeping kids in public school, and some libertarians have almost as vested an ideological interest in proving that the market works. But because vouchers is such a new issue, and because it is so politically complex (many inner-city Democrats support it; many suburban Republicans don't), an unusually large number of people are genuinely uncommitted—and could be swayed by compelling evidence, just as many Democrats have been swayed by the data on welfare reform.

And even if such a study didn't resolve the debate (it might show, for instance, that voucher kids scored better but that their left-behind peers did worse), it could have beneficial side effects. For one thing, it could prompt some liberals to support further voucher experimentation in the paradoxical hope that better data would torpedo the idea in the long run. More importantly, it might lead conservatives to put in place the conditions that ensured that vouchers boosted performance. One possible reason the data from Cleveland and Milwaukee has been underwhelming is that, in both cities, suburban public and private schools don't participate. If conservatives pressured state legislatures to require suburban schools to accept voucher kids (and raised the voucher amount to make them more attractive to admit), they could stack the empirical deck in their favor. Which would be a great thing. Because it doesn't ultimately matter who wins the voucher debate, as long as poor kids get a better education in the process.

PETER BEINART

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opt Out

NOT LONG AFTER he helped kill an amendment that would have required businesses to treat stock options as expenses, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle got a letter from the Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC). The council, a tech-sector lobbying group, wrote to say, "Thank you . . . in particular [for] your support for the high-tech industry's position against the expensing of stocks."

Few documents more clearly illustrate the deterioration of New Democrat ideology in the post-Clinton era. Once upon a time, being a New Democrat meant believing the party shouldn't pander to interest groups. New Democrats stood up to labor and backed free trade; they bucked the Children's Defense Fund and supported welfare reform; and they broke with big-government tradition to reduce the deficit. In popular parlance, New Democrats were "pro-business." But agreeing with business wasn't the goal. When business became a narrow interest group itself, New Democrats fought it too. Bill Clinton, for example, vetoed a 1995 bill that would have helped shield corporate wrongdoers.

That, sadly, was then. How badly do today's Democrats misunderstand the difference between a coherent, centrist ideology—which sometimes overlaps with the desires of business—and a morally bankrupt, interest-group politics in which business occasionally stars in the role of special interest? Consider the events that prompted ITIC's letter. In February, Senators John McCain and Carl Levin introduced legislation preventing businesses from treating stock options as expenses when they do their taxes but not when they report their profits—a bit of double-talk that helped Enron turn a $112 million tax bill into a $278 million refund two years ago. But Daschle wouldn't schedule a vote. So after WorldCom, Levin and McCain shifted tactics and tried attaching variants of their legislation to the larger accounting-reform bill. Again, it never came to a vote. Daschle, according to *The New York Times*, "was instrumental in killing" McCain's amendment last Thursday. Then on Monday, Daschle looked on as Texas Republican Phil Gramm derailed Levin's follow-up—an attempt to delegate the options decision to an independent accounting board known to favor McCain's expensing approach. Daschle had insisted earlier in the day that "[t]here will be a vote on the Levin amendment. It will be today, tomorrow, next week, or some date in the future." But Senate staffers close to the process now concede it's unlikely there will be a vote anytime soon—and that if there is, it will be rigged to fail.

Daschle has admitted that in the days before he quashed the McCain amendment, he took a lobbying call from John Doerr, the most prominent Democratic donor in Silicon Valley and the co-author, in recent weeks, of *Washington Post* and *New York Times* op-eds opposing the legislation. Doerr and other high-tech donors say that options are impossible to value, and therefore impossible to expense, and that requiring companies to expense options will deny them to hard-working employees. But as John B. Judis has explained in these pages (see "Option Play," May 6), neither of these objections withstands scrutiny even on their own terms. Companies *already* value options when they calculate their tax deductions, and the only reason companies would stop awarding them once they had to expense them would be if they were using options to hide expenses in the first place. What's more, the original McCain-Levin legislation didn't even require companies to deduct options from their bottom line. It only required them to account for options the same way on both their balance sheets and their tax returns. Whether they accounted for them as an expense or not was up to individual companies.

But Daschle and other Senate Democrats went along anyway. And in so doing, they didn't merely sell out to business; they retreated to a craven style of governing in which the interest group that lobbies the hardest on an issue determines the party's position. During last spring's education debate, Democrats quietly killed vouchers at the behest of teachers' unions. Last winter House Democrats—including 50 ostensible New Democrats—opposed trade promotion authority under pressure from the AFL-CIO. And now Daschle and Co. are rewarding their Silicon Valley underwriters.

The irony is that now is exactly the time when a principled, New Democratic ideology should be flourishing. On the one hand, the public craves a restoration of trust in markets—the sort of thing that will be accomplished not by punitive, populist measures but by tough regulations that increase transparency and accountability. On the other hand, the least principled Republican administration in history keeps demonstrating the perils of caving in to corporate self-interest. You'd think Tom Daschle would be paying attention. Instead he's hoping we're not. ■

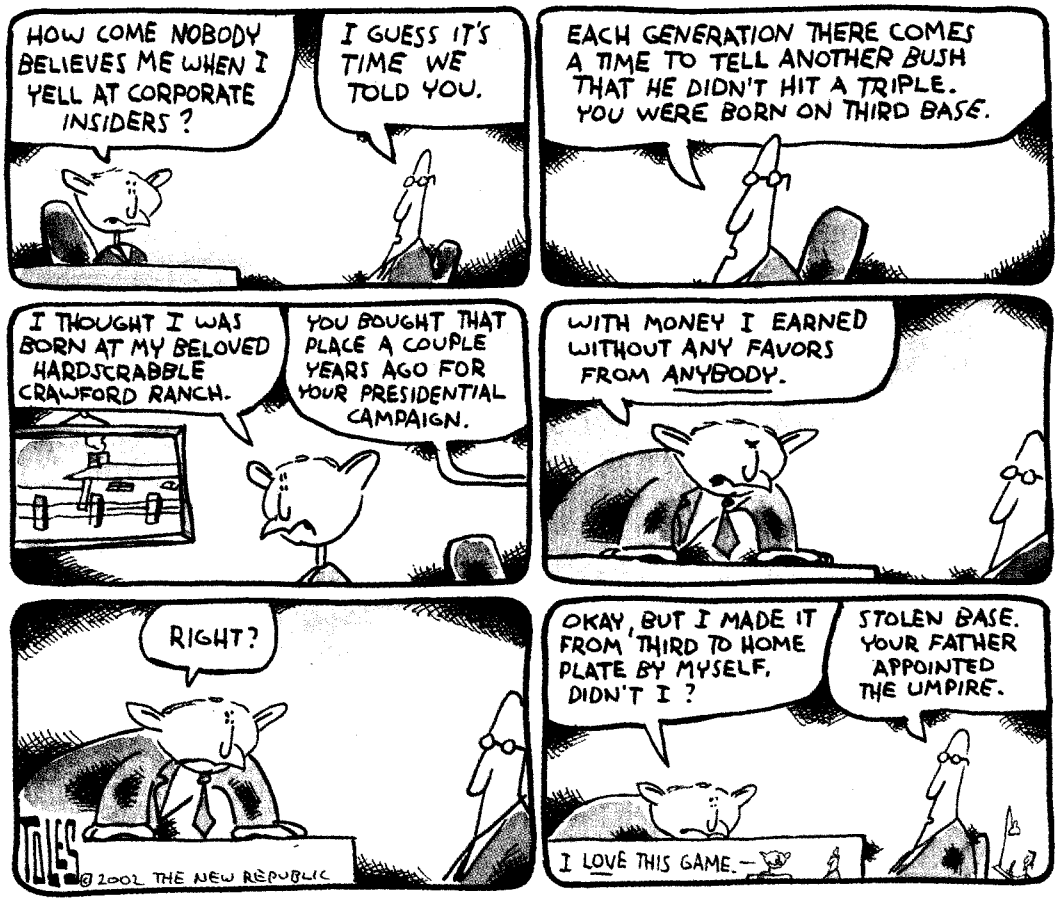
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

DON'T TELL, DON'T ASK: For months this space has noted that George W. Bush's favorite political anecdote—the one in which he claims that during the 2000 campaign he told a reporter in Chicago that he would be willing to run deficits in case of war, recession, or national emergency—is almost certainly a lie. As must be the case in such instances, the evidence for our assumption was a lack of evidence: No reporter who covered the campaign can remember Bush ever having said this; there's no record of him having said it; and the White House, despite repeated media requests, has been unable to provide any proof that he said it. Until now, that is. In a skeptical article about the "trifecta" anecdote, the *Chicago Tribune*'s Jeff Zeleny quotes White House spokesman Scott McClellan: "Those of us who traveled with the president on the campaign trail recall the president saying it." (McClellan, notes Zeleny, "did not elaborate.") McClellan's corroboration—a nonspecific claim by a Bush underling—is something short of airtight. But it is a start. We implore others "who traveled with the president" and recall the incident to come forward and clear this up once and for all. Or, failing that, to persuade W. to stop telling the story. Zeleny also reports that "some senior advisers have asked Bush to eliminate the [trifecta story] from the stump speech. They hope the move will quash the talk among Washington critics that Bush may be telling tall tales." We accept the offer: If he stops, so will we.

AH, FOR THOSE BY-GONE DAYS WHEN YOU'D ONLY GET SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE: "Military jets escorted a plane to LaGuardia Airport on Tuesday night after a passenger became alarmed by others passing notes, officials said."—Associated Press, July 17

DISPATCHED: Andrew Meldrum made a mistake. In April, Meldrum, *The Guardian*'s Zimbabwe correspondent—who has also penned Harare dispatches for TNR—wrote an article in which he reported that thugs supporting Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe had beheaded a woman who belonged to the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change. Meldrum sourced his report to an article that had appeared in Zimbabwe's only independent daily newspaper, *The Daily News*, which had quoted an elderly farmer who claimed his wife had been murdered by Mugabe's militia. As it happened, the elderly farmer was lying and *The Daily News* report was incorrect. *The Daily News* published a follow-up article reporting that the beheading story was untrue, and *The Guardian* did the same. And that's where the whole affair should have ended. But in Zimbabwe, where the Mugabe regime has been trying to muzzle the independent media in its brutal campaign to suppress dissent, an honest journalistic mistake is an opportunity for more suppression. So in May, Zimbabwean authorities arrested Meldrum—and two *Daily News* reporters—charging all three with abusing their positions as journalists by publishing falsehoods. (Some in Zimbabwe have alleged that the elderly farmer was paid to invent the story.) Meldrum's trial began in June (one *Daily News* reporter was released, while the other and his editor go on trial in late July); this week—remarkably—a regional magistrate in Harare found Meldrum not guilty. But moments after he was acquitted on July 15, Zimbabwean officials served Meldrum with deportation papers, ordering him to leave the country within 24 hours. As TNR went to press, the Zimbabwean supreme court had just agreed to hear Meldrum's appeal of the deportation order. Perhaps the supreme


HOW COME NOBODY BELIEVES ME WHEN I YELL AT CORPORATE INSIDERS?
I GUESS IT'S TIME WE TOLD YOU.
EACH GENERATION THERE COMES A TIME TO TELL ANOTHER BUSH THAT HE DIDN'T HIT A TRIPLE. YOU WERE BORN ON THIRD BASE.
I THOUGHT I WAS BORN AT MY BELOVED HARDSCRABBLE CRAWFORD RANCH.
YOU BOUGHT THAT PLACE A COUPLE YEARS AGO FOR YOUR PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.
WITH MONEY I EARNED WITHOUT ANY FAVORS FROM ANYBODY.
RIGHT?
TOLES
©2002 THE NEW REPUBLIC
OKAY, BUT I MADE IT FROM THIRD TO HOME PLATE BY MYSELF, DIDN'T I?
STOLEN BASE. YOUR FATHER APPOINTED THE UMPIRE.
I LOVE THIS GAME.—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

court—like the lower court that acquitted Meldrum—will display judicial independence and courage and rescind the deportation order. But even if it does, Mugabe's thuggish regime will surely find some other way to persecute Zimbabwe's journalists. After all, why should it treat them any different than anyone else?

WELL, OK, THERE WERE A COUPLE OF TIMES: "Never, in all the interrogations . . . did John [Walker Lindh] ever say anything against the United States—never once. Not one word. John loves America, and we love America. God bless America."—Lindh's father, Frank, *The Washington Post*, July 16

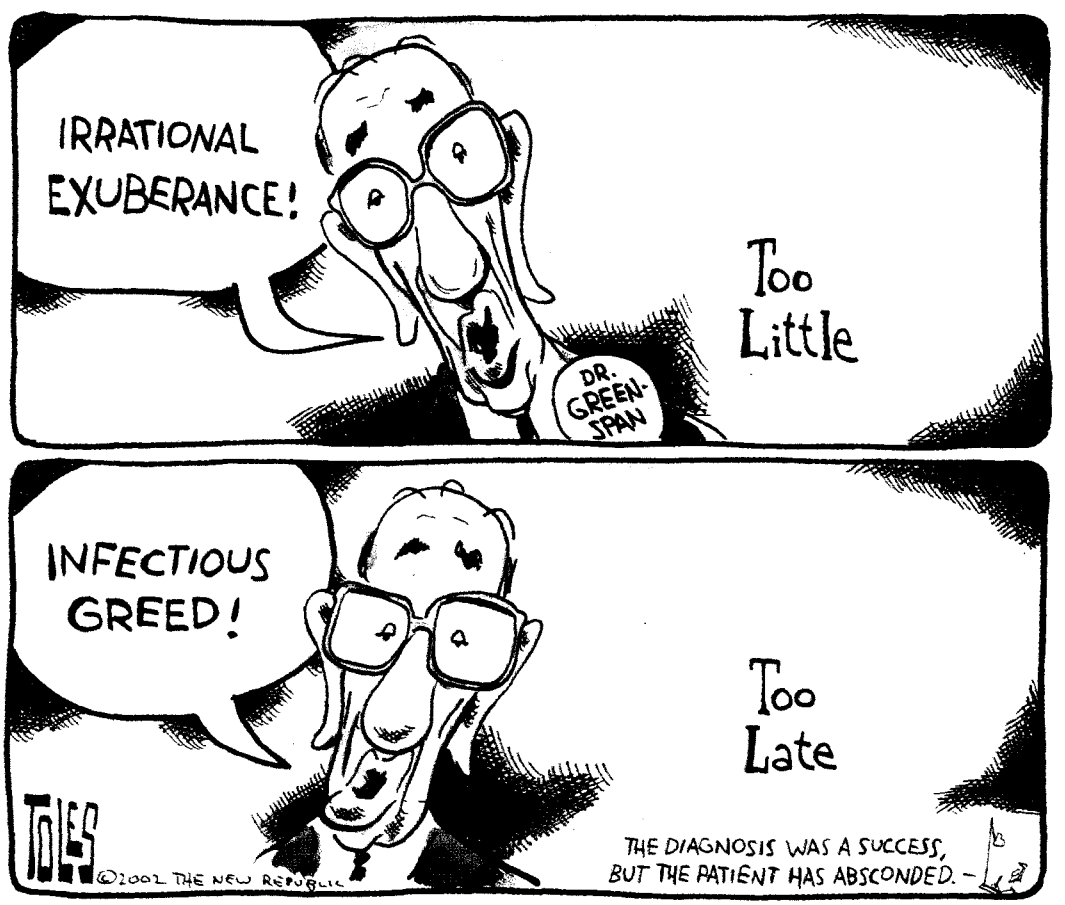
"Yes, I supported it."—John Walker Lindh's response when pressed on whether he supported the September 11 attacks, *Newsweek* Web exclusive, December 1 (Thanks to *OpinionJournal.com.*)

IDIOCY WATCH, CONT'D: "Suicide bombing—and the planes of nine-eleven were living bombs—is a purposive self-annihilation, a confrontation between oneself and oneself, the extreme end of autoeroticism; killing oneself as other, in the process killing others. It is when one sees oneself as an object capable of destruction in a world of objects, so that the destruction of others is indistinguishable from the destruction of self. . . . Suicidal resistance is a message inscribed in the body when no other means will get through. It is both execution and mourning, for both self and other. For you die with me for the same cause, no matter which side you are on. Because no matter who you are, there are no designated killees in suicide bombing. No matter which side you are on, because I cannot talk to you, you won't respond to me, with the implication that there is no dishonor in such shared and innocent death."—Columbia Professor Gayatri Spivak, from a speech delivered at Leeds University, June 22 (Thanks to Michael Weingrad.)

SUBTLE AS A SPHINX, CONT'D: "FED CHIEF EXPRESSES GUARDED OPTIMISM"—headline, *USA Today*, July 17

"GREENSPAN ISSUES ALARM ON SCANDALS"—headline, *Los Angeles Times*, same day

CORPORATE SELF-PITY WATCH: "I grew up in Communist Hungary. Even though I graduated from high school with excellent grades, I had no chance of being admitted to college because I was labeled a 'class alien.' What earned me this classification was the mere fact that my father had been a businessman. It's hard to describe the feelings of an 18-year-old as he grasps the nature of a social stigma directed at him. But never did I think that, nearly 50 years later and in a different country, I would feel some of the same emotions and face a similar stigma."—Intel Chairman Andrew S. Grove, *The Washington Post*, July 17



BAD FOR THE JEWS: "[Joe] Lieberman . . . is receiving helpful suggestions on how he might wiggle out of his promise not to challenge Gore [for the Democratic presidential nomination]. He recently was handed a document, written by a rabbi, that offered Talmudic precedent for altering a pledge."—*The Baltimore Sun*, July 17

WOULD THAT HE HAD: "Whenever a [suicide] attack occurs against the enemy, I feel as if I carried it out myself."—Saddam Hussein, the Associated Press, July 16 ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another Bush scandal: the budget.

Private School

By JONATHAN CHAIT

WASHINGTON COMMENTATORS HAVE spent the last week debating the relevance of President George W. Bush's and Vice President Dick Cheney's private financial misconduct. But they're missing a bigger scandal: the administration's *public* financial misconduct. And this story is a lot easier to report. Rather than hide away the crucial evidence in some Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) investigator's file, in this case the administration has published the incriminating document for all to see. It's called the federal budget.

The Harken Energy and Halliburton debacles, as most people know by now, involved companies that artificially inflated their earnings and allowed Bush and Cheney to walk away with healthy personal profits before the public got wise. The budget scam works a similar way but on a vastly grander scale. First, Bush and his cronies used deceptive accounting to make it look like the federal government could afford a massive tax cut and still pay off the national debt. It couldn't. Now they're using the same dishonest accounting methods to argue that our current budget deficit will be short-lived. It almost certainly won't.

When Bush first put forward his tax cut early last year, opponents warned over and over that the surpluses with which he proposed to fund it might not materialize. "We have said all along these are nothing more than projections that could change almost immediately," cautioned Senator Tom Daschle in March 2001. And over and over, administration officials dismissed these warnings. "Well, we really can't miss," insisted Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels last year when questioned about the reliability of surplus forecasts. "We've been underestimating revenue by as much as eighty billion [dollars] a year. And we are likely to continue doing that."

Now, just as the White House says Bush didn't know his Harken stock was about to fall before he sold it, they claim he couldn't possibly have known the surplus was about to plummet. As Daniels put it last week, the surpluses of the late '90s were "more closely tied to the stock market run-up than perhaps was thought at the time," so when the stock market dropped, federal tax revenues fell far more than anticipated. "No one as far as I know really saw this coming." Actually, many economists (the primary exceptions being those employed by, or shilling for, Bush) worried it might. In *Fuzzy Math*, his primer on the Bush tax cut, Paul Krugman warned that "the high tax take in recent years has had a lot to do with the bull market on Wall Street . . . in light of the market's plunge, [the surplus projection] does not seem like a safe, or even a reasonable, assumption." But the Bushies blithely disregarded such warnings.

And far from learning its lesson, the White House is using the same Pollyannaish forecasting today. Despite the tanking stock market and wave of business scandals, the White House assumes corporate profits will shoot up 70 percent by 2005—an estimate wildly more optimistic than most private-sector forecasts. "If you compare their projections to ours," explains Andrew Hodge, the chief U.S. economist for DRI-WEFA, the largest econometrics firm in the United States, "they have a dollar level that's close to thirty percent higher."

IT'S HIGHLY UNLIKELY the Bush administration's rosy revenue estimates will come to pass, but at least it's not impossible. The same can't be said of its spending projections, however, which stand precisely zero chance of fulfillment. The White House sets aside just $190 billion for a prescription-drug benefit this decade, barely half the cost of the bare-bones $350 billion House plan Bush has praised. On top of that, it projects domestic discretionary funding will rise a mere 2 percent per year over the next five years. In real, per capita terms—that is, adjusting for inflation and population growth—that means an 8.4 percent cut. All the while Bush proposes new funding for education, the SEC, foreign aid, and other programs.

Does the administration intend to enact such draconian spending cuts? Of course not. Whatever sliver of moral authority Bush had to demand austerity disappeared when he signed the bloated farm bill. Bush is proposing cuts in popular and necessary programs, like embassy security and safeguarding nuclear plants, in the full expectation that Congress will override him. He did the same thing last year, flamboyantly insisting he wanted to cut pork but giving up without a fight when Congress balked. The purpose is simply to lay the grounds for an alibi. When Congress inevitably surpasses Bush's spending targets, even if just to keep spending constant in real terms, he has a ready scapegoat for the ensuing red ink.

Bush's wildly optimistic economic projections, along with his utterly fantastical spending projections, combine for a budget forecast that foresees the deficit falling dramatically starting next year. While the Senate GOP budget forecasts that the deficit will rise to $194 billion next year, Bush predicts it will drop to $109 billion and continue dropping until it disappears altogether by 2005. The date is a politically convenient one: If the budget fails to hit the mark, voters won't know until after the president has already been reelected.

In the summer of 2000, Cheney summed up the administration's smug sense of superiority about its private-sector experience. "Looking back at the government, so to speak, from the private sector," he told Larry King, "I think I've got some lessons learned now and some wisdom I didn't have before." The lesson both he and Bush seem to have learned is that to benefit from shady accounting, you don't need to fool people forever. You only need to fool them long enough to get away with it. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where's Our Sense of Urgency?

John E. Chubb is chief education officer, Edison Schools; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Beginning in the 2005–6 school year, states will be required to test all students in grades 3–8 in reading and mathematics and to make "adequate yearly progress" to get all students to a proficient level of achievement within twelve years. These are the most important provisions of the "No Child Left Behind" Act, passed by Congress earlier this year, a compromise with President Bush's original plan.

This significant act places the federal government squarely behind testing and accountability on a nationwide basis. Most states will have to beef up their testing systems substantially to track student progress from grade 3 through grade 8.

This important act, however, is jeopardized by its timetable for achieving results. Congress and the president took a full year to agree that the country could wait fifteen years for all students to achieve minimum proficiency. This timetable implicitly acknowledges that many of America's school systems have no hope of improving in any reasonable timeframe.

The most telling statistics are those on America's fifty largest public school systems. These systems range from New York City, with more than one million students, to systems such as Denver, Colorado, with just over 70,000 students. In between are large countywide systems such as Prince George's County, Maryland. Nearly a third of America's young people attend schools in these systems.

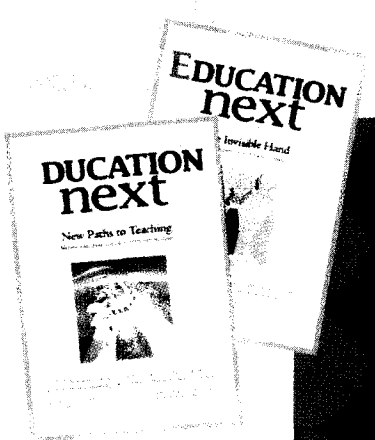
Over the last three years, the average rate of improvement of these systems on tests measuring whether students reach a proficient level of achievement (criterion-referenced) has been only 2.4 percent a year. At that rate, and with the current level of proficiency at less than 50 percent, it will be twenty-five years until those systems reach 100 percent! Large districts with high poverty levels will need thirty years to hit the federal target. Finally, eleven large systems have rates of improvement of less than 1 percent—putting 100 percent proficiency a half century in the future.

The same pattern holds for systems using tests that measure students in percentiles against a national sample of students (norm-referenced) where the average rate of gain in the fifty largest systems is 1.3 percentiles per year. If we define the fiftieth percentile as a measure of proficiency and assume that a district will achieve full proficiency when its average reaches the seventy-fifth percentile, the largest districts would require another twenty-five years to achieve the federal target—and high-poverty districts would take thirty-five years.

The progress of America's largest school systems makes a federal goal of fifteen years look ambitious. But where is the nation's sense of urgency? **Twenty-five to fifty years waiting for no child to be left behind means several lost generations.** Progress need not be this slow. Every year hundreds of schools show that students can achieve proficiency in a short time. At Edison Schools, whose 75,000 students make it the forty-second-largest system, the average test score gains have been 5.7 and 4.7 points per year on criterion-and norm-referenced tests, respectively. The nation ought to demand that all school systems make this kind of progress.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



Interested in cutting-edge ideas about K-12 education?
Subscribe to *Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research.*
Visit us on-line at www.educationnext.org or contact us to receive a complimentary copy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Hill

Stock Answer

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

IT MUST BE easy being a talk-show booker in Washington these days. Not long ago, when George W. Bush looked invincible, and top Democrats were less blatant about their presidential ambitions, finding marquee pols willing to denounce the president was hard work. Not anymore. The handful of Democrats keen to replace Bush in the White House have now all but declared their intentions, if only through their fund-raising and primary-state travel. And weeks of White House bumbling, combined with a lull in the war on terrorism, have again made Bush a political mortal. The result has been a wave of 2004 contenders cascading across the chat shows. In the past week alone Joe Lieberman, appearing on ABC's "This Sunday" and then on CNN, charged that Bush lacked the "moral authority" to restore confidence in the markets. On CBS's "Face the Nation," Representative Richard Gephardt warned with oh-so-deep concern that Vice President Dick Cheney must clear the air over Halliburton's business practices. North Carolina Senator John Edwards showed up on CNN to imply that Bush's lame speechmaking lopped 700 points off the stock market. And Senator John Kerry paid a visit to MSNBC's "Hardball" to offer his own economic ideas. "A run in '04 looks a lot more hopeful than it did a few months ago," says a strategist for one of the leading Democratic contenders. "Just as a morale booster, this is significant."

But for ambitious national Democrats, the political opening created by Harken Energy and WorldCom is more complicated than it appears at first blush. It presents the White House wannabes with a hard choice between base-pleasing populism and the pro-business restraint that reassures corporate donors. And while they're searching for how best to use the financial scandals against Bush, they're more quietly searching for how best to use the scandals against one another.

No one has been more pleased with the change in political weather than Dick Gephardt. In recent years the House Democratic leader has feinted toward the sensible center, but he has always seemed most comfortable as a full-throated, fiery populist. He is also far surer on kitchen-table economic issues than on the foreign policy questions that have held the country's attention since September. And he happens, unlike some of his Democratic rivals, to have a strong record on corporate regulation and shareholder rights. To prove it, his office last week released a 26-page report, titled "Drive to Deregulate," which chronicled his opposition to various 1990s-era Republican deregulation efforts. The report's primary aim was to shame the congressional GOP. But it did not escape the notice of *The Washington Post*, or of some other Democrats, that among the measures Gephardt singled out for particular scorn was a rollback of shareholders' lawsuit rights, which both Kerry and Lieberman backed. "Collateral damage," says one party operative. And some rivals are striking back, suggesting that Gephardt's history of raising money from financial interests will undermine his Wall Street-bashing populism. "Here's a guy who is the ultimate Washington insider," notes an adviser to another Democratic hopeful. Another points out that Gephardt has so far avoided taking a position on a proposal to make companies count stock options as expenses.

If Gephardt seems to benefit most naturally, Lieberman finds himself the most uncomfortably situated. For months he has been casting himself as pro-business—complaining, for instance, that Al Gore's "people versus the powerful" campaign mantra was ill-conceived. Now Lieberman is finding that terrain more dangerous. This week *The New York Times* rewarded him with a story headlined "LIEBERMAN'S PRO-BUSINESS VIEWS MAY HAUNT HIM," which said the senator has found himself in "an awkward and somewhat defensive position" and "is rethinking some long-held views." The story didn't show evidence of much rethinking, however, and Lieberman still opposes expensing stock options. In fact, some Lieberman defenders argue that standing out from the populist pack, while uncomfortable right now, will benefit him in the long term. "That's a briar patch I think he wants to be thrown into," says a Democrat close to Lieberman. "It'll be remembered that he didn't go off the deep end."

GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE of fund-raising to a presidential campaign—especially one against the massively financed Bush—Lieberman isn't the only prospective candidate wary of the deep end. Witness the way Senate Leader Tom Daschle, also thinking about a 2004 run, smothered Senator John McCain's amendment last week to count options as expenses after a phone conversation with high-tech mega-donor John Doerr (see "Opt Out," page 7). "We've worked very hard to woo the high-tech community," says one party strategist, calling it "the one reliable segment of the Democratic business community."

John Kerry, too, has worked hard to build ties in the business world—especially among high-tech business moguls who care about options in particular. Perhaps not coincidentally, he has lately inverted the standard Democratic posture: offering fierce criticism of Bush's foreign policy but remaining relatively restrained on economic issues. Speaking on MSNBC's "Hardball" this week, for instance, Kerry's take on the economy was strikingly bland: "We're doing pretty well in some regards, but we could be doing better." He recently told *The Wall Street Journal* that he feared the Democratic response was "too sweeping and too class-oriented." His slick campaign website appears not to mention the corporate scandals. (Gephardt's house leader site, by contrast, is now practically devoted to them.) And on stock options, a Kerry aide says the Massachusetts senator is preparing a compromise solution that would "avoid taking away the incentives for companies to give stock options to rank-and-file employees." One party operative suggests all this could have something to do with Kerry's carefully cultivated business ties. Kerry brags about his Internet expertise; and in one weekend

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trip to Silicon Valley last year, Kerry raised a cool $250,000. "He may not want to be the most shrill voice on this one," says the Democrat. A Kerry aide scoffs at this; and it's true that Kerry, a war hero trying to escape the Massachusetts-liberal tag, may simply prefer to concentrate on guns instead of butter. Either way, Kerry, who generally has a knack for getting his critiques of Bush into print, has been an uncharacteristically minor figure in this latest pile-on. But, like Lieberman, he may be betting that's a smarter place to be in the long term.

GORE, ON THE other hand, has lunged in the other direction. Bush's dark hour has been a golden "I told you so" opportunity—and Gore has seized it, regularly attacking the administration's corporate ties. It's true he's grown quieter since the White House started arguing that the problems began under Bill Clinton; Gore has said nothing, for instance, about Harken and Halliburton. But the Gore camp stresses that he's not laying low—that, in fact, he has been out in front of his rivals. "It's others who have followed Gore's call," says his spokesman, Jano Cabrera. "Gore was the first and the most forceful voice. He was the first to call for [Security and Exchange Commission Chairman Harvey] Pitt's resignation—that was before Daschle or McCain." And Gore will reportedly have more to say on the subject soon. Looks like "people versus the powerful" is back.

The only top-tier Democratic wannabe likely to benefit as much as Gephardt from the corporate-accounting scandals is John Edwards. Edwards, after all, made his fortune as a trial lawyer representing people injured by corporations, and the issue offers him a way to highlight that history. On CNN this week Edwards was the tribune of the little guy. "[P]eople are struggling. People are suffering," he explained. "There are a lot of people in this country who believe [Bush] sees things through the eyes of the CEOs of corporate America instead of through the eyes of ordinary investors, ordinary Americans." Edwards's office told THE NEW REPUBLIC, for the first time, that he would support an effort to require the expensing of stock options. How can Edwards afford to be so tough? His major source of campaign cash is trial lawyers, not corporate leaders.

Democratic strategists concede there are risks to the populist attack strategy—not only in alienating donors but in alienating swing voters as well—so even Edwards is careful to keep his critique focused on the Bush economic team and on specific corporate crooks, not business in general. As one Democrat who has written recent talking points on the issue for rank-and-file members of Congress says, "We are being very careful about how anti-corporate we make this." Indeed, with some polling showing no real advantage for Democrats on these questions, some party centrists say Democratic bluster might not be such a good idea. "Politically, there is a danger that we somehow send a signal that Democrats are slipping into the anti-business, anti-growth, class-warfare type of message that eroded the trust and confidence the American people had in the Democratic party" in the 1980s, says an aide to one moderate Democrat. Spin from a Democrat caught on the wrong side of a front-page issue? Perhaps. But it's spin no Democratic candidate can easily ignore. ■

The 9/11 blood-donation disaster.

Bad Blood

By DOUGLAS STARR

IF YOU TURNED on your television in the immediate aftermath of September 11, you probably saw images of Americans—tens of thousands of them across the country—lining up to give blood. This patriotic offering brought tears to the eyes of many of us. Unfortunately, it created nothing but trouble for the nation's blood banks. Faced with an unprecedented turnout, the American Red Cross and other organizations overcollected so massively that they had to discard thousands of gallons of the perishable liquid. The donor crush caused a cascade of problems: Money was wasted; sub-par blood was collected; and other components, such as platelets, were neglected. Even worse was the general loss of faith in America's blood-collection system that produced a slump in donations from which we're still trying to recover.

The events confirmed something that people in the blood business had long known but never managed to communicate to the public: Mass appeals for blood after a crisis may soothe our sense of wounded nationhood and answer a need for community action; but as a public health response, the practice is useless—or worse.

The custom of mass blood-giving began during World War II when Americans repeatedly rallied to give blood and plasma to our wounded soldiers. Scattered blood banks had been operating before, but the war triggered the first national mobilization. The military assigned a disaster-relief agency, the American Red Cross, to take charge of the collections while drug companies and university labs processed the material. Blood became a key material of the war and a symbol of gritty sacrifice on the home front.

It was easy to be a donor in those days. You'd walk into the blood center, submit to a quick check-up, and tell them if you'd ever had malaria. Doctors would test your blood for syphilis and blood type. Your blood went to the blood bank, and you walked out a hero.

The process has become more complicated since then, mostly because we no longer accept the appalling blood-borne-disease rates of those early days. Today you start by filling out a form with dozens of questions designed to trip you up if you're concealing an unhealthy lifestyle or a disease. Many can be irritatingly confusing, personal, or both, such as this one for female donors: "In the past twelve months have you had sex with a male who has had sex even once since 1977

DOUGLAS STARR is co-director of the Knight Center for Science and Medical Journalism at Boston University and author of *Blood: An Epic History of Medicine and Commerce*. A documentary series based on the book appeared recently on PBS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with another male?" Check yes or no.

Next technicians put your blood through a battery of lab tests for pathogens unknown a few decades ago, such as HIV, HTLV, and Hepatitis C. They separate and save the plasma and platelets and send the packed red cells—the most valuable component—to the blood bank. It takes at least one hour to donate your blood—assuming there's no line—and two days for your blood to make its way to storage. From there it can be shipped to any hospital in the United States, sold to other blood banks, or swapped for other blood types in response to local needs. Like milk, blood is perishable: If red blood cells aren't used within 42 days, they are generally destroyed.

In short, blood banks don't resemble MASH units anymore. They've become modern pharmaceutical laboratories requiring sustained, controlled input. "The term 'blood bank' is really unfortunate," says Dr. Robert Jones, president and CEO of the New York Blood Center on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "We're not a bank at all—we're more like a pipeline."

Usually there's just enough blood in the pipeline: Of eligible Americans, only about 5 percent give regularly. Often the input slows to a trickle, such as during holiday periods or summer vacations, when Americans are preoccupied with family and fun. That's why you always hear blood centers issuing emergency appeals around Christmas and the Fourth of July.

Sometimes, however, the pipeline gets clogged. That's what has happened, according to studies by veteran blood banker Dr. Paul J. Schmidt, after almost every major disaster of the last 25 years—the Chicago elevated-railroad disaster of 1977, the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel collapse of 1981, the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995, the Columbine High School shooting of 1999. Schmidt found that in every case the local blood banks already had enough blood on their shelves to take care of the wounded. The sad truth is that in modern calamities, especially those involving airlines, the death rates are so appalling that few people survive long enough to need blood. Even in a worst-case scenario—say, if an airplane crashed into a sports stadium—local blood centers could either supply what they needed or import it from other regions. Yet after every disaster people queue up at blood centers in an almost Pavlovian response.

That isn't so bad after a local disaster: One blood center can always ship its overflow to others, since the pipeline needs a constant infusion. But when an entire nation mobilizes, the pipeline backs up. And that's what happened in the weeks following September 11, despite the best efforts of those who knew better.

DR. JONES REACTED typically for a blood banker as the tragedy unfolded. "When I saw those buildings go down, the first thing I thought was: We're not going to need any blood for this. Nobody's going to survive." Nonetheless, he immediately dispatched 600 units of red cells to area hospitals, the bulk of which was never used. As the lines of donors snaked around the block, he put out an announcement: The center would only take blood from people with type O, the "universal" donors; everyone else should go home. But no one left. As thousands of donors moved through the system, centers throughout the city began running short on supplies like blood bags and testing reagents.

The scene was repeated across the United States. So powerful was the symbolic value of blood that other nations offered to give—a well-meaning gesture but something American health officials could never allow. India offered to send blood, even though its supplies are neither adequate nor safe. Wire services ran an unintentionally ludicrous photo of Yasir Arafat donating blood in Gaza for the victims in Washington and New York. By the end of the first day everyone in blood banking knew they faced a glut. But they felt powerless to turn back the tide, especially when people who knew nothing about blood kept publicly urging citizens to give. "Pray, give money, and donate blood," became the mantra of news anchors and politicians. Some compounded the problem by telling people to give at their local hospitals, most of which don't even collect blood.

THE NAÏVETÉ REACHED the highest levels of government. Around 11 p.m. on September 11, as an exhausted staff of the Washington-area Red Cross slumped around a meeting table, a call came in from the office of the president of the United States: Would they be so kind as to conduct a high-visibility Executive Office blood drive the next morning? Dutifully they did, on little sleep and for no practical purpose. Two days later, well after it became clear the donor spigot simply had to be turned off, they got a call from the U.S. Congress to run a blood drive among senators and representatives—and to present each member with a videotape of him or her giving blood to show constituents. Not a single unit from these collections went to the victims of 9/11.

The people who knew the most about blood tried vainly to control the flow. In order to avoid bottlenecks in the system, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued emergency waivers to allow new technicians to shorten their training time and to accept blood that had not been fully tested. Such blood was labeled "For Emergency Use Only." On September 14 the Health and Human Services Department held a meeting at which the nation's leading blood-banking organizations agreed to put out a statement telling Americans to stay home and come back in a few months. They were about to issue it when the Red Cross, led by the headstrong Dr. Bernadine Healy, reneged. "What [the Red Cross] did was irresponsible and dangerous," says Dr. Ronald Gilcher, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Blood Institute. "They actually told people to keep donating."

Healy adhered to the obsolete dogma that the Red Cross should never turn away a qualified donor. She also had another plan in mind. The Red Cross had been thinking about creating a frozen blood reserve to make the nation's blood supply more secure. With all the excess blood sloshing around, this might be the right time to launch it. The agency announced a crash program to freeze 100,000 units of blood. Never mind that there was no scenario under which such quantities could imaginably be used, even as a backup supply. (The military, the only population that might require such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quantities, has its own independent blood system and frozen reserve.) The Red Cross quickly bought up most of the available blood freezers in the country and gutted a warehouse in Philadelphia to use as a frozen blood bank. But it was unprepared for other realities: For example, in order to freeze blood you need a glycerol solution, which protects the red cells from breaking. There wasn't enough glycerol to treat the quantities of blood Healy envisioned. The Red Cross also lacked aluminum canisters, freezing bags, and even FDA approval to utilize the process they had chosen. In the end they froze fewer than 10,000 units, while tens of thousands of others continued to accumulate and contribute to the overall waste. The subsequent revelation that the agency intended to commit $50 million of the Liberty Fund for the victims of 9/11 to the frozen blood reserve project was said to be a factor in Healy's resignation. "It was a disaster," says Dr. Harvey Klein, chief of the Department of Transfusion Medicine at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), "a total, total disaster."

As the weeks passed, the cost of the post-9/11 mobilization started to become clear. According to the best available figures, the nation collected about 572,000 more units of blood in the three months following September 11 than it would have otherwise. The "outdate" numbers—the rate at which the blood becomes spoiled and has to be thrown out—remain murky, partially because the United States does not maintain a centralized database and partially because some collectors would rather not broadcast the extent of the waste. Depending on whose estimates and extrapolations you accept, the waste ranged anywhere from 100,000 pints to more than 300,000 pints. True, a lot of plasma was salvaged from those units. But that does not mitigate the colossal waste of red cells. Given that hospitals pay blood banks about $180 per unit for red cells, the discarded amount represents a total value of anywhere from $18 million to $54 million.

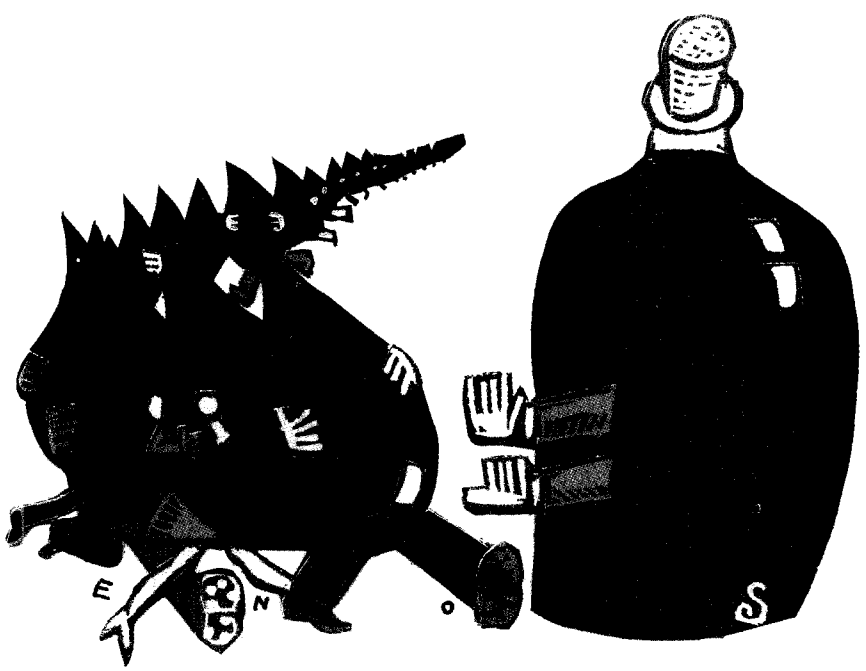
Spoiled blood was not the only problem. The blood collected under the FDA's "emergency use" waiver was never used, since it carried the stigma of being not quite the best. Blood that could not reach testing labs in time because of transportation bottlenecks had to be discarded as well. No one has come up with a national figure for this wastage, but Klein, who runs a small blood bank at NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, estimates he had to throw out 14 percent of the blood he collected because of screening errors or testing delays. "Mass appeals," he concludes, "are not effective or safe."

Then there were the collateral effects as the consequences of the deluge rippled through the system. Some centers faced shortages of platelets—an extremely perishable component that's essential to chemotherapy patients. So many staff members had to be pulled off their normal jobs to cope with the glut of donors that they could not run the machinery to harvest platelets from blood.

The most troubling consequences involved the donors themselves. Donor rates crashed after the initial weeks of the crisis to below where they were before 9/11, as people lapsed into apathy or lost sight of the nation's long-term blood needs. The staffs at many blood centers took names and addresses, asking donors to return when their blood was really needed. But most people didn't. As one blood banker told me: "People came out of the woodwork to donate ... and then they went back into the woodwork." Sadly, one of the lowest return rates was that closest to Ground Zero. Of all the donors who lined up at the New York Blood Center, fewer than 10 percent returned to give blood. Supplies throughout the nation declined so dramatically that by December many blood centers were issuing emergency appeals. Today, despite all the consciousness-raising that 9/11 could have produced, blood supplies are lower than at this time last year.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to give blood and no denying the nation's constant need for the liquid. The country uses 14 million pints per year—more than we consumed during all of World War II. Indeed, it's the routine shortages that plague us—a situation that will get worse as the population ages and as more and more risk groups are banned from giving blood. (Currently the FDA is phasing in a donor ban on people who've spent significant time in Europe, in order to protect the blood system from the theoretical threat of mad cow disease. That ban alone will eliminate 25 percent of New York City's blood supply.) But there are smarter ways to sustain the national pipeline than with patriotic appeals in a crisis.

One way is to make blood-giving more convenient. The reason we need to invoke civic heroism and patriotic duty is that donating has become so difficult. There are thousands of blood centers across the nation, but there never seems to be one around when you want one. "They ought to be as common as Starbucks," joked one blood banker. Perhaps not *that* com-



RANDALL ENOS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mon—blood centers are expensive and highly regulated—but every mid-sized hospital should have one with long collection hours that fit the schedules of busy donors. Maybe the Red Cross and regional collectors could lease space in hospitals to make their services more widely available, something they have never really considered. That would help compensate for the demise of the big factories and union halls that used to be the staple of community blood-giving.

We also need to collect smarter. All blood is not the same: We need more of certain blood types, such as O, and less of others, such as AB and A. The equipment now exists to take double units of blood from O donors, plasma from ABs, and only the platelets from As; but most centers still use the take-it-all approach.

Finally, we need to look for new categories of blood donors. Gay men face a lifetime ban because as a group they have a statistically higher risk of HIV. The ban is too blunt an instrument: Most gay men are perfectly healthy, and the new lab tests at blood centers can quickly detect the virus. We need to loosen that ban as AIDS becomes an increasingly heterosexual disease. We also need to accept blood from the nearly one million Americans with hemachromatosis, a genetic condition in which the body absorbs too much iron. Doctors treat this condition with phlebotomy, the only modern use for the ancient practice of bloodletting; all that precious blood goes down the drain. There's nothing inherently wrong with using that blood, which according to even conservative estimates could provide hundreds of thousands of pints per year. But because accepting it requires special FDA permission and extra expense, only 29 of the nation's more than 4,000 blood centers do so.

None of this means the end of civic heroism. But the real blood-donor heroes of 9/11 were those who gave blood in the days and weeks *preceding* the attack—after all, it was their blood that was already on the shelves. The question is: How can the rest of us can become more like them? ■

The case for foreign aid.

Safe Deposit

By GREGG EASTERBROOK

PAUL O'NEILL AND BONO'S recent Africa trip—during which the odd couple wore fun clothes and inspected village wells—made headlines across the United States. But lost in the celebrity-induced excitement was a more significant development in the debate over foreign aid: George W. Bush and other prominent Republicans suddenly want to increase it. "I am here today," Bush told a United Nations conference last March, "to reaffirm the commitment of the United States to bring hope and opportunity to the world's poorest people and to call for a new compact for development defined by greater accountability for rich and poor nations alike." The president adroitly avoided the phrase "foreign aid," but everyone knew what he was talking about. Around the same time, Jesse Helms, long the Senate's determined roadblock to international assistance, announced that he too thought aid spending should rise. Bush pledged the United States to its first foreign aid increase in many a moon—a small one but significant for a nation where political discourse generally, and Republican discourse specifically, has been anti-foreign-aid for decades.

Bush's speech and Helms's conversion suggest that the politics of foreign aid may be changing. But they won't change enough as long as most Americans—in both parties—think foreign aid doesn't work. One reason many Americans think so is that they expect foreign aid to banish developing-world poverty and to build liberal democracies across the globe; by that standard, aid indeed has failed. But that's the wrong standard. The realistic benchmark is whether international assistance has made the world better than it would otherwise have been. And by that standard, foreign aid has not only been a success; it has been a triumph. In most developing nations, living standards are rising, and health care and education are improving, in part because of foreign aid. Billions of people are better off today thanks to Western help, however inconsistent and snafu-prone that help has often been. "On a world scale, the risk, intensity and severity of poverty has fallen more sharply in the past fifty years than in the preceding thousand," in part owing to aid from the West, Michael Lipton, a professor at the University of Sussex, has written. If the Bush administration spearheaded an ambitious new commitment to more accountable foreign aid, the cost to the United States would be small, but the benefits to humanity could be remarkable.

Some years ago I had a free day in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. I decided to walk around—walking being safer than boarding the perpetually overcrowded buses, off of which passengers often fell. Dotting the city were large structures—office buildings, high-rises—that appeared to be under construction but on closer inspection had been abandoned in the midst of assembly, their exposed beams rusting. Western money funded the building starts, but the aid ran out, or the loans were embezzled; and there the structures sat, worse than useless considering that the resources could have been spent on something simpler, like modest housing. Beat-up old cars, many 1950s-vintage models imported from the United States, bounced along cratered roads that lacked even the simplest maintenance. According to a 1998 World Bank

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

study, Tanzania has received $2 billion from the West in road-maintenance aid since the late '70s, and during that period the condition of its roads has declined. Outside the city stood the hulk of a steel mill, built mainly with Western aid. It was modern, impressive-looking, and it didn't run.

TANZANIA IS NOT alone. World Bank officer William Easterly calculates in his 2001 book *The Elusive Quest for Growth* that based on the billions it has received in aid, the Zambian economy could by now have grown to a Western-like $20,000 per capita income. Instead Zambia's per capita income is $600, down in real terms since the '50s. Corruption explains some of this. Jeffrey Winters of Northwestern University estimates that of the $8 billion in World Bank funds channeled to Indonesia since about 1960, one-third has been stolen. In Congo (then Zaire) the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko siphoned off enough foreign aid to enjoy Nero-level opulence amid the desperation of his people. And though the World Bank and most Western donor nations have worked diligently in the last decade to reduce aid theft (Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz has said one of the best arguments for international aid is that the corruption problem is finally being resolved), misappropriation is ongoing. A recent bribery scandal, for instance, marred the World Bank-funded Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a water-supply effort in South Africa. Estimates vary, but it is widely believed corruption has claimed at least 10 percent of global aid.

Combine that with the endless depressing statistics about life in the impoverished world, and you can understand why so many Americans consider foreign aid a failure. Some 1.2 billion people now live on $1 or less per day, and every year that quotient of misery increases by another million. Since World War II the West has allocated roughly $1 trillion to foreign aid, yet inequality is "accelerating everywhere on Earth," proclaims the leftist International Forum on Globalization. The gap between the developing and developed countries has grown so wide that the world's three richest individuals are now worth more than the 48 poorest nations.

But these depressing statistics obscure more than they reveal. In fact, much has improved in the developing world during the era of foreign aid. In 1975 the average income in developing nations was $1,300 (in 1985 dollars) per capita; today it is $2,500. In 1974 one-third of the world's nations regularly held genuine multiparty elections; today two-thirds do. In 1975 1.6 billion people lived at what the United Nations classifies as "medium development," meaning with reasonably decent living standards, education, and health care; today 3.5 billion people do—a stunning increase in the sheer number of human beings who are *not* destitute. Global adult literacy was 47 percent in 1970 and is 73 percent today, while school enrollment for girls has skyrocketed. Infant mortality has declined and life expectancy has risen in almost every developing nation. The world's population is growing not because of more births—fertility is down almost everywhere—but because of fewer deaths. Even in developing nations, it is becoming the norm for a person to survive to old age. At the beginning of the twentieth century, average life expectancy in the United States was 47 years; today it is 66 years—*for the world*.

Yes, each year brings more people living on $1 per day, but this is mainly because each year brings more people; the *percentage* of the global population living in such hardship is in steady decline. An estimated 800 million people in the world today are malnourished, but the *percentage* of people who are malnourished is dropping, and the world's average daily caloric intake continues to rise—so much so that for the first time in history, there are roughly as many people on Earth who are overweight as are underweight. A few decades ago the Stanford University population theorist Paul Ehrlich was predicting global famine, projecting that by now hundreds of millions would have died of hunger while Middle Ages-style plagues swept the globe. Respectable opinion echoed this view with a presidential report commissioned by Jimmy Carter, *Global 2000*, forecasting in 1980 that by the year 2000 vast numbers would starve or die of uncontrollable plagues while entire ecosystems collapsed. Not even the awfulness of the African AIDS epidemic comes close to what experts were expecting. Instead, for all the problems poor countries continue to experience—especially in Africa—for most people in most developing nations, life is mostly getting better.

In some ways this is the great story of the developing world over the last half-century: Things have not fallen apart. And one of the reasons is international assistance. Sure, many Third World countries have not enjoyed sustained economic growth. But asking whether foreign aid has brought growth is the wrong question, since Western governments often do poorly in picking and choosing winners in their own economies, too. The morally realistic standard is whether foreign aid brings humanitarian gains. And by that standard, it has been a success.

CONSIDER SOME OF foreign aid's accomplishments. First are the health care initiatives. Smallpox has been eradicated globally via a U.N.-run, Western-financed campaign that completed its work in 1977, the heyday of aid money. River blindness, a scourge of Africa, which once infected hundreds of thousands of people, has been nearly eradicated by Western-backed health initiatives. Fully 80 percent of the world's children are today vaccinated against polio, diphtheria, and other diseases, compared with almost no vaccinations in the developing world when foreign aid began roughly a generation ago. Most of those immunizations were paid for by the World Health Organization (WHO) or by the contractor agencies it dispatches to small villages across the globe; WHO draws most of its money from donor countries in the West. It took about 150 years, from 1800 to 1950, for typical European life expectancy to advance from four decades to six. In most of the developing world, it has taken just 40 years, from 1930 to 1970. Helping most of the world achieve, in 40 years, the life-span improvement that took Europe 150 years is a spectacular achievement—partly attributable to the advent of antibiotics and partly to international aid.

Next, aid has brought birth control and reproductive-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

health care to the world's impoverished. The International Planned Parenthood Federation, funded mainly by Western aid, has established family-planning clinics throughout the developing world. Its work, and that of other groups with Western support (including about $300 million annually from the United States), is a primary reason the global population runaway, predicted as recently as the '70s, has not come to pass. In the '50s developing-world women averaged six live births; now the figure is three and still declining.

Or consider agriculture. In the mid-'60s India and Pakistan experienced wrenching national famines; Ehrlich predicted that hundreds of millions in the subcontinent would starve to death. A doomsday book called *Famine 1975!*, by Paul and William Paddock, forecasting imminent global starvation, was a best-seller in the late '60s. International aid organizations—some government, some private (mainly the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations)—launched an ambitious initiative to introduce high-yield crops into Pakistan and India, shipping trucks of high-yield seeds from a research institute in Mexico to the subcontinent on an emergency basis. In two years in the mid-'60s conversion to these high-yield crop strains stopped the famines that had been widespread in India and Pakistan for several years. Rather than starving as predicted, Pakistan and India have used these high-yield crops to become self-sufficient in food production despite population growth. Pakistan, which harvested roughly 3.4 million tons of wheat annually in the early '60s, was harvesting 18 million tons by the late '90s; India went from 11 million tons to about 60 million.

Would the Green Revolution have come to developing nations regardless of aid? Perhaps eventually, but many millions would have died needlessly in the interim. China researched high-yield rice strains on its own and dramatically increased rice production without Western help. But the increase did not become significant until the '80s, almost two decades after productivity rose dramatically in the subcontinent, with huge numbers of Chinese suffering malnourishment as their nation went it alone in adopting Green Revolution farming. As Norman Borlaug, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Iowa plant breeder who oversaw the effort in Pakistan and India, puts it: "What was accomplished in India and Pakistan could not have happened without aid support money."

Foreign aid's success in promoting macroeconomic—as opposed to social and agricultural—development is decidedly mixed. But for every Tanzania, Zambia, and Congo, there is a South Korea. Destitute after Japanese occupation and the Korean War, South Korea has lifted its per capita GDP to $16,000 since the '50s. Of course, Seoul's export-led economic model played a major role in that success. But developmental aid was also an important part—particularly in improving the country's infrastructure and educational system. In their book about foreign aid, *A Half Penny on the Federal Dollar*, Brookings Institution analysts Michael O'Hanlon and Carol Graham cite South Korea as a prime example of development aid translating directly into development.

And South Korea isn't alone. Ideologically charged debates often center around whether aid or trade conquers poverty. But in countries that have followed the "Tiger" model of export growth—Indonesia, Bolivia, Ghana, Vietnam, Chile, Botswana—foreign aid has often buttressed market-oriented development strategies. Indeed, foreign aid is one of the levers donors have used in recent years to push developing-world governments to liberalize their economies. Donors, for instance, have helped Vietnam start a thriving coffee-export trade; Chad is on the verge of tapping its petroleum reserves via an oil pipeline built with World Bank support.

Uganda, another African country that has opened itself to market economics, owes about half of its national budget to Western aid. Progress there has been remarkable: Poverty has declined by one-third in the last decade; spiraling inflation has been stopped; the percentage of children in school is sharply increasing; and Uganda also leads Africa in progress against AIDS. Americans spent about 29 cents each on Uganda last year and, for that tiny amount, made a palpable difference in people's lives.

It is true, of course, that not all foreign aid has been this successful. In the '60s and '70s, for instance, European donors pushed on developing countries a statist, socialism-lite that mirrored their own domestic economic organization. And the United States often funneled aid as a reward to corrupt and repressive cold war allies like Mobutu. But there is at least some reason to believe foreign aid is becoming more effective—that we will see more Ugandas and fewer Tanzanias. A group of World Bank analysts concluded in their 1998 study *Assessing Aid* that the main thread running

SELÇUK DEMIREL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through positive foreign aid projects was association with positive social trends. Give money to entrenched, anti-reform governments, and you shouldn't expect much; fund new or reformist regimes, and good things might happen. Worry less about exactly which project to pick—no one can ever be sure what will work—and more about whether the governments being supported are progressive and accountable. Easterly, in *Elusive Quest for Growth*, adds that it is essential that all aid projects contain incentives. On the local level, individuals in the project area must participate or otherwise get something tangible, however small, granting them an incentive to cooperate. At the national level, only reformist governments should be funded, giving leaders the right incentive. Those principles now form the basis of most International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank aid—and they were the basis for Bush's March speech as well. Foreign aid, which for all its foibles has done tremendous good, may do even more good in the years to come.

BUT FOR ALL its merits, foreign aid lacks a stable, powerful American political constituency. Long scorned by the libertarian right, it is now increasingly scorned by the anti-globalization left as well.

Conservative opposition to foreign aid is nothing new. Some of it is based on stinginess; some on distaste for developing-world anti-Americanism; and some on the view, best elucidated by the late British economist Peter Bauer, that aid actively backfires by keeping corrupt, incompetent developing-world elites in power. But to view foreign aid with disdain, as many conservatives do, deprives the West of credit for one of its signal contributions to the world. It also dishonors America's spiritual heritage, as all the monotheistic faiths impose on the favored an obligation to help the less-well-off. After declaring that the United States should fund a crash program to stop African AIDS, the 81-year-old Jesse Helms gave the suggestion that he had dropped his long-standing opposition to increased foreign aid because he is aware that he will soon meet God. This is clear thinking.

Traditional conservative objections to foreign aid have been joined in recent years by left-wing complaints, via the anti-globalization movement—leaving foreign aid politically stranded. Anti-globalizers don't oppose assistance per se; they oppose aid that comes with reformist strings, such as IMF loans with "structural adjustment" clauses that require recipient governments to adopt free-market and free-trade policies. The leftish Institute for Policy Studies protests that IMF requirements mean the bank "holds virtual neocolonial control over developing nations." Yet though anti-globalizers don't want Western governments imposing terms on aid, *they* are happy to do so. One is that money be spent only on projects deemed "sustainable." In recent years anti-globalizers and various foundation-grant trendies have so barraged the World Bank and similar organizations with the buzz term "sustainability" that donors are increasingly leery about funding anything much beyond village solar projects or similar ideas that sound small-scale and low-input.

Very little in Western economies meets the left's shaky definition of "sustainability," which more or less translates as no fossil fuels, no built structures, and no packaging. Indeed, foisting this standard on the developing world is a formula for keeping living standards low. Even the environmental rationale for "sustainability" doesn't make much sense: No current resource is in short supply, not even petroleum, and no important resource—other than groundwater in China and freshwater in a few other regions—seems likely to fall into short supply in the near future, based on present information. In turn, some industries that could be sustained indefinitely—like logging—are amongst the ones anti-globalizers hate most.

The anti-globalization movement may be politically marginal, but its street protests have proved effective means of political pressure. The movement, for example, has successfully mau-maued the World Bank and other donor institutions into withdrawing essentially all support for the construction of hydro dams, such as the Narmada River complex that India is now struggling to complete without Western financing. To be sure, dam construction in the developing world often displaces the poor, usually on rough terms, and this is a serious problem; the West should not support developing-world dam construction without ensuring fair treatment of the displaced. But the dams themselves provide pollution-free energy, clean drinking water, and irrigation for agriculture. Not only do nearly all developing nations need more electricity generation to improve living standards—India currently has 6 percent as much electric power per capita as the United States—but to improve human health. The number of children in developing nations who die each year from respiratory diseases caused by *indoor* air pollution, mainly from indoor fires for cooking and heating, exceeds the number of Americans of all ages who die of all causes. Anti-globalizers oppose the dams, power plants, water reservoirs, and other big aid-backed projects that could change that, and their views have gained surprising influence among the Western donor institutions that now live in terror of PC criticism.

SIMILAR PRESSURE INHIBITS Western donors from exporting high-yield agricultural techniques to Africa, the one part of the world where subsistence farming remains ubiquitous. Environmentalists and anti-globalizers have, for example, fought Western proposals to send fertilizer to Africa, which struggles with some of the world's poorest soils. Anti-globalizers romanticize farming with animal-drawn plows as "appropriate," but most wouldn't last a day at the dehumanizing toil this form of existence imposes and rewards only with meager survival. The United States could do its next great service to the world by teaching Africa our granary-filling methods of farming. Instead, trendy complaints from well-fed anti-globalizers and enviros keep donor institutions from supporting an African Green Revolution. It is a strange and terrible irony that the left's influence over the World Bank and IMF, and the American right's influence in Congress, are conspiring to deny needed and worthwhile foreign aid at the very moment, as Stiglitz notes, that such aid is becoming more honest and effective.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As a result, the United States today gives shockingly little to the world's poor. In the years immediately after World War II, when the United States was funding the successful reconstruction of Western Europe under the Marshall Plan, 15 percent of the federal budget went to foreign aid. Today polls show that most Americans *think* 15 percent of the federal budget goes to foreign aid—and they consider that too much. According to polls, most Americans think foreign aid should consume between 1 percent and 5 percent of the federal budget.

If only it did. In fact, the United States devotes about half of 1 percent of federal spending to foreign aid. The roughly $11 billion for foreign aid in Bush's latest budget request is only about one-seventh as much, in inflation-adjusted dollars, as the United States spent on foreign aid during the Marshall Plan years, when the United States had many more domestic problems that required government money. The aid total in Bush's current fiscal year budget is lower in absolute dollars—not inflation-adjusted—than was spent on aid during most years of the Ronald Reagan administration. And the real figure is even smaller than that, since about $4 billion of the $11 billion goes to Israel and Egypt in what is officially called development aid but is for all intents and purposes an annual payment to ensure observation of the treaty that ended the 1973 Israel-Egypt war. By contrast, all of Africa—excluding Egypt—wracked by poor public health, illiteracy, and malnutrition, receives a mere $1.3 billion annually in U.S. development support, a small fraction of the annual amount Congress just added to U.S. agriculture subsidies.

All industrial nations have reduced aid over the last decade, as "donor fatigue" has set in and rising social-welfare obligations to retirees have increasingly dominated the balance sheets of Western governments. But America's reduction has been the most stark, with the country now spending just 0.1 percent of GDP on aid—less a share of national income than that spent by *Portugal*—versus an average of 0.24 percent for the OECD nations. True, other OECD nations—like Japan, usually the world leader in total international development assistance, and Denmark, the world leader in assistance as a share of GDP—do not have significant military obligations, mainly because the United States shields them. But while the United States must protect the globe, the United States is also the wealthiest nation on Earth. To trail Portugal in an important measure of moral responsibility to the world should keep even foreign aid skeptics awake at night.

Before the O'Neill-Bono road show, Bush pledged the United States to a roughly $1.5 billion per year increase in foreign aid. That is admirable but would still leave the country well behind what it was spending in the '50s, when the United States was far less affluent. The administration has proposed that the defense budget rise by $48 billion this year, and the increase is justified. But various estimates, including those from WHO and from Columbia University aid advocate Jeffrey Sachs, hold that increasing America's spending against international AIDS by around merely $2.5 billion per year could dramatically improve African public health, perhaps saving millions of lives. Two and a half billion dollars is about what it costs to build a new attack submarine. Can anyone seriously argue that the same amount to help stop a continent-wide epidemic wouldn't be money well spent?

In the aftermath of September 11 some have suggested the United States should increase foreign aid to improve its image abroad and thus make us safer. This would probably not work—after all, most of the 9/11 murderers came from Saudi Arabia, a wealthy nation that receives no aid; and in any case all were fanatics. But most of the men and women of the developing world mean no harm to anyone. They are struggling to survive and appeal to us for aid. Aid we must send them even though we know some will be stolen or wasted. We must do this because it is right. ■

How you help the president help his brother.

He Ain't Heavy

By RYAN LIZZA

INTIMATE TREASURES, a sex shop in the resort town of Fort Walton Beach, is housed in a pink-and-blue, virtually windowless concrete building—just the kind of faux-cheery structure one finds in commercial strips throughout the Sun Belt. According to its website, the store specializes in sensual lingerie, erotic games, massage oils, and "videos, videos, videos." A few years ago a sales clerk at the store was charged with two counts of obscenity for selling allegedly beyond-the-pale pornography to undercover cops. Intimate Treasures is, in short, not the sort of place one associates with government largesse—particularly not from a Republican administration that pledged to restore "honor and dignity" to the White House. Yet last September 19 the sex shop received a low-interest, 25-year loan for $410,250, guaranteed by George W. Bush's Small Business Administration (SBA). Why? Perhaps because whatever its failings, Intimate Treasures possesses one attribute that makes it a highly attractive destination for federal dollars: It's located in Florida.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance the Bush administration places on Florida. It is the largest swing state in the country, the ground on which Bush won his contested victory in 2000, and a cornerstone of the White House's reelection strategy in 2004. But more than any of these

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population
And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the destruction of our environment, and to create an economy that will be sustainable over the very long term.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening environmental problems without coming to grips with their root cause – overpopulation.

If present immigration and fertility rates continue, our population, now over 288 million, will pass 400 million by the year 2050 – and still be growing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately be futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, but reverse it, so that our population can eventually be stabilized at a sustainable level – far lower than it is today.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: At what size should we seek to stabilize U.S. population? Unless we know in what direction we should be headed, how can we possibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually stabilized is supremely important because of the effect of sheer numbers of people on such vitally important national goals as a healthy environment, and a sustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a U.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or about its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be reached in about three to four generations if we do two things now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. Halt illegal immigration and reduce annual legal immigration to not over 100,000. Then, immigration will no longer contribute significantly to our population growth, as it does now.
2. Lower our fertility rate (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.1 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.

Incentives to Lower Fertility

NPG proposes these incentives to motivate parents to have no more than two children:

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax exemption for dependent children born after a specified date.
- Give a Federal income tax credit only to those parents who have not more than two children. Those with three or more would lose the credit entirely.
- Give an annual cash grant to low income parents who pay little or no income tax, and who have no more than two children Those with three or more children would lose the cash grant entirely.

Two Vastly Different Paths Lie Before Us

With the reductions in immigration and fertility we advocate, our nation could start now on the path toward a sustainable, and prosperous, population of 125 to 150 million.

Without such a program, we are almost certain to continue our mindless, headlong rush down our current path. That path is leading us straight toward catastrophic population levels that can only devastate our environment, and produce universal poverty in a crowded, polluted nation.

If you agree that we need to work toward a smaller U.S. population, we need your support. NPG is the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and for specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.

NPG is a nonprofit, national membership organization established in 1972. Contributions to NPG are tax deductible to the extent the law allows. To become a member, and receive our newsletter, plus all our current and future publications, please send us your check today.

YES! I want to become a member of NPG, and help you work towards a smaller U.S. population. I am enclosing my check for annual membership dues.

_____ $30 _____ $50 _____ $100 _____ Other

Name_____

Address _____

City_____ State_____ Zip _____

Mail to: Negative Population Growth, Inc.
PO Box 53249 • Washington, DC 20009
www.npg.org TNR 072902

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

things, it is the state in which the president's younger brother Jeb is running for reelection as governor this November. No matter what else happens at the ballot box this fall, if Jeb loses to the eventual Democratic nominee—either Janet Reno or Bill McBride—it will be seen as a humiliating defeat for the president and a vote of no confidence for his administration. As a result, it seems that no federal grant, no business loan, no tinkering with federal policy that might give Jeb a political leg up is too small to merit White House attention. "We believe we are not just in a battle with the Florida Bushies but the Washington Bushies too," says Ryan Banfill, Florida Democratic Party spokesman. "And we're not just running against the White House. It's like we're running against the State Department, the Education Department, and the rest of the Cabinet too." Over the past year and a half the administration has lavished attention on Florida—visits by the president and Cabinet members, high-profile federal conservation projects, joint policy and political planning with the governor's office, and lots and lots of money. Though overall figures on discretionary federal spending are difficult to calculate, Florida seems to be getting a disproportionate share in exactly those areas most likely to help Jeb this fall. In other words, if you pay taxes, you're probably helping to reelect the president's brother.

In 2000, when Hillary Clinton ran for the Senate in New York, pro-New York policies made by the Clinton administration made headlines as a presumed sop to Hillary's campaign. Some, such as the president's clemency for members of the Puerto Rican terrorist group FALN, even prompted congressional investigations. By contrast, the press has paid relatively little attention to the way W. has used his office to boost his brother's political fortunes. Almost every week brings another example of federal policy being altered to Florida's—and specifically Jeb's—benefit. After 9/11, when Jeb complained that new restrictions on foreigners making international flight connections in the United States were hurting Florida's tourism, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) loosened the rules. In March the Bush administration gave Jeb a lift with environmentalists by backing restrictions on off-road vehicles in Big Cypress National Preserve—even though it simultaneously discarded a Clinton-era snowmobile ban in Yellowstone National Park. Earlier this year the Bush administration announced that NASA would move a major space shuttle maintenance program—and with it hundreds of high-paying jobs—from California to Florida. W. has toughened sanctions on Cuba and restricted oil drilling near Florida's beaches. Brotherly love has even led him to break a contract. Just this month a federal judge ruled that the administration had violated a legal agreement by acceding to Jeb's request that it not move forward with new protections for Florida manatees. "No justification has been offered for this delay other than Governor Bush's request," the judge wrote. "Whatever the political ramifications, such a justification cannot excuse a violation of the agreement."

According to a report in *The Palm Beach Post* last year, the Bush brothers' political advisers hold a joint weekly conference call to discuss Florida strategy and how Washington can help Tallahassee. One way Washington helps is by sending the president to Florida—often. Since being sworn in, W. has visited Florida ten times, more than any other state but Pennsylvania. Then there is the platoon of Bush Cabinet secretaries regularly parachuting into the state, including, by The New Republic's count, Commerce Secretary Don Evans (five times); Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, Interior Secretary Gale Norton, and Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham (three times each); Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge (twice each); and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta (once each). Ever wonder why the Beltway press writes so little about Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez—who as a Hispanic Bush administration official from the electoral battleground of Orlando is a sort of laboratory-perfect political tool for Jeb? Maybe it's because he's so frequently in Florida (nine trips so far). And even when administration officials don't show up in the state, their press offices regularly send quotes to Jeb for use in his press releases announcing new pots of federal money.

And the new pots of federal money come with remarkable frequency. Nowhere has the president's desire to help his little brother been more evident than in the wave of federal funds washing into Florida—and in the seamless integration between the White House and the governor's office in directing and hyping them. In particular, the White House has sent Washington dollars to buttress the three primary themes of Jeb's reelection effort: education, homeland security, and the environment.

Education is the issue Florida voters care about most, and, like his brother in the White House, Jeb campaigns relentlessly on the subject. Often he's not campaigning alone. Education Secretary Rod Paige has already been to Florida a whopping eight times. As the World Trade Towers were struck on September 11, President Bush was reading to children at a Sarasota elementary school, in part to draw attention to a reading initiative his brother had announced a few days earlier.

Indeed, the Bush brothers have masterfully linked their twin education plans, implying that Jeb's program is the ideal state complement to W.'s new federal law. Just as Jeb's top education priority is an early-reading initiative he calls "Just Read, Florida!", the Education Department's top priority is implementing the "Reading First" component of the new federal education law. In April, Jeb applied for federal Reading First funds with a proposal based on recommendations from his so-called Reading Leadership Team. What has gone unreported, however, is that two of the members of that 32 person "team" also sit on the federal panel that considers each state's proposal. In other words, two of the folks who helped write Jeb's proposal were also on the committee that decided whether to fund it. When Paige announced the first three states to win these major new reading grants in June, Florida—surprise!—made the list, picking up a tidy $45.6 million for Jeb's reading program (a fact he was quick to tout in press releases and at an Orlando event with Paige himself

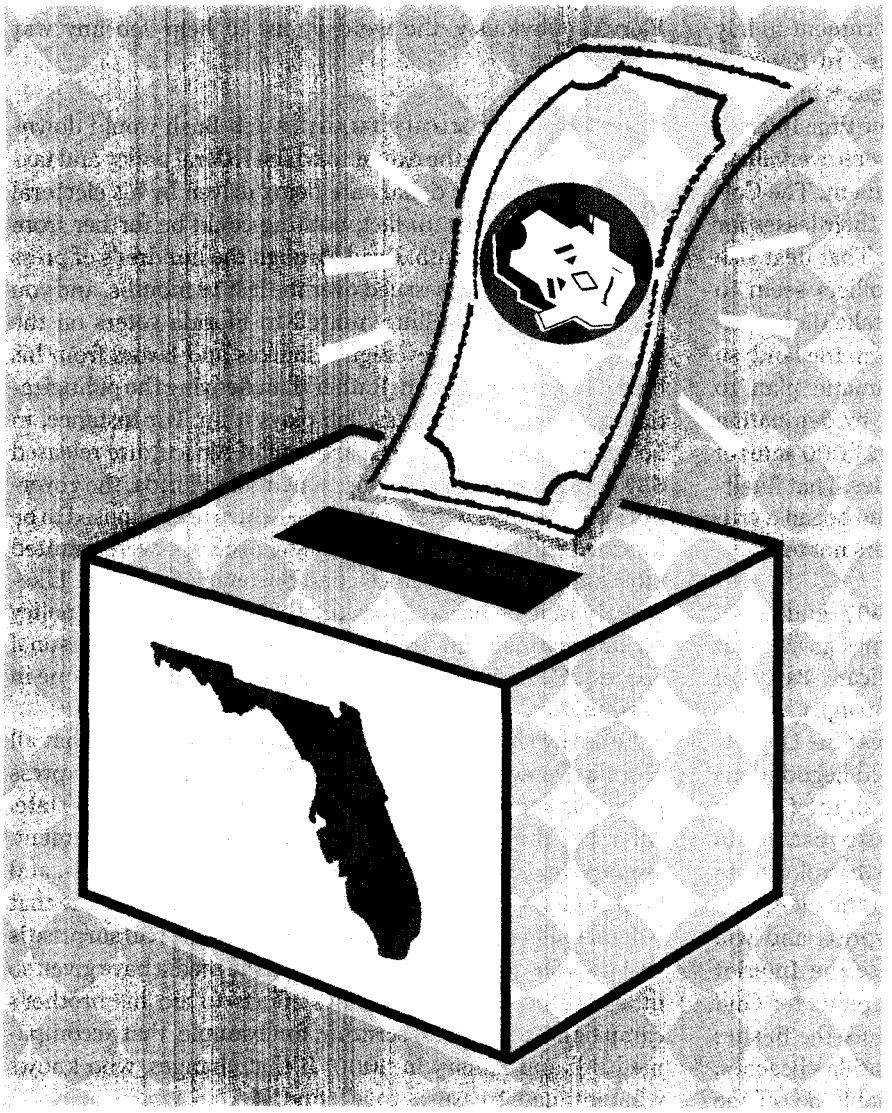
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two weeks later).

In the wake of 9/11, homeland security displaced education as Florida's most important political issue—and here, too, the administration has done well by the Sunshine State. Take the SBA, the same agency that arranged a loan for Intimate Treasures. Following the attacks, the SBA made low-interest Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to any U.S. company hurt as a direct result of 9/11. Perhaps counterintuitively, no state has benefited as much from the program as Florida. With tourism to the state suffering in the aftermath of the attacks, Jeb aggressively advertised the federal program. The SBA conducted workshops throughout the state to educate businesses about the loans; the head of the SBA himself was dispatched to Miami in December to present the first checks at an event with Jeb. As of June 28, fully one-quarter of the SBA loans, worth $89 million, have gone to Florida—more money than to the next three biggest recipients (California, Texas, and New York) combined. (The hardest-hit New York businesses are eligible for separate SBA funding streams.) The total number of loan applications from Florida approved by the SBA for this program is equal to that of the next five states combined.

Then there's the Transportation Department's port-security grant program. Last month Secretary Mineta awarded $92.3 million to states to beef up the safety of the nation's waterways. Mineta made the announcement in New York, one of the busiest ports in the country. But the big winners were again Florida and Jeb Bush. As the governor himself noted, more than 21 percent of the new Transportation Department funding goes to Florida's ports. Indeed, Florida received more than twice as much as the New York/New Jersey port, even though more cargo goes in and out of that harbor than all of Florida's ports combined. In fact, measuring by cargo volume, not one of the nation's 15 busiest ports is in Florida. Were terrorists to smuggle a container packed with weapons of mass destruction into the United States, Florida isn't a likely point of entry. But insiders say the criteria for the grants was skewed toward ports with lots of passenger ships or petroleum tankers—characteristics that just happen to favor Florida's harbors.

But perhaps the Bush administration's costliest pro-Jeb policies have been its environmental ones. While many observers have noted the glaring discrepancy between the administration's conservationist impulse in Florida and its pro-development, pro-extraction impulses everywhere else, few have pointed out that White House efforts to burnish Jeb's environmental bona fides have come with a price tag—one being picked up by American taxpayers.



STEPHEN SAVAGE

Jeb, like every other viable politician in Florida, opposes drilling for oil or gas off the state's coast. It is no coincidence that the Bush administration, despite its insistence on tapping energy sources on sensitive lands in Alaska and elsewhere, has steadily reduced drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico near Florida's shores. The first big decision came in July 2001 when the Department of Interior, which was preparing to sell a batch of new oil and gas leases in the Gulf, collectively known as "Sale 181," shrank the area to be opened for drilling from the Clinton-era proposal of 5.9 million acres down to 1.5 million—sparing giant chunks of the eastern and northern sections of the original plan (i.e., the ones closest to Florida) from exploration and reducing by hundreds of millions of dollars the revenues the government will collect.

President Bush's second set of Florida drilling decisions, announced this May 29 in the Oval Office with Jeb by his side, was even more politically advantageous. The administration agreed to pay $235 million in taxpayer dollars to buy back oil and gas leases in the Gulf and in southwestern Florida. (That $235 million equals more than one-third of the administration's entire land-acquisition budget for 2002.) The first part of the arrangement involves paying Chevron, Conoco, and Murphy Oil $115 million to relinquish leases in an area of the Gulf known

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as Destin Dome, 25 miles south of the white-sand beaches of Pensacola. Those oil companies had bought the Destin Dome leases in the 1980s with the understanding that exploration was subject to state and federal approval. Florida objected to the drilling plans at Destin Dome, and the companies sued. The administration is now settling the lawsuit by buying back the leases. But we are almost certainly shelling out too much money. The Destin Dome leases were originally bought from the government for just $13 million or about $1.2 million each. And last December the feds sold 95 leases in Sale 181 to oil companies for a little more than $340 million (an average of $3.6 million per lease). Under the recently announced settlement, however, some of the very same oil companies are selling the government seven leases a few miles north of Destin Dome for $115 million, an average of $16 million per lease—at least six times the per-lease average the Clinton administration paid to settle a virtually identical Florida drilling lawsuit in 1995. In short, under the current deal, Jeb and W. get to pose as conservationists, the oil companies make a massive profit—and taxpayers get stuck with the tab.

The Bush administration also announced another deal in May—its $120 million purchase of oil and gas leases in the Everglades. The leases, scattered across 400,000 acres, are owned by one of the biggest developers in Florida, the Collier family, which has been trying to get the government to buy the highly speculative mineral rights for years. In 1996 the Colliers lobbied the government to swap the leases for closed Navy bases that the family could develop. At the time Interior officials argued that the Everglades leases were overvalued by the Colliers and worth little to the government. The Colliers tried again in 2000, proposing to trade their leases for lucrative land at Homestead Air Force Base. That deal also failed. From these disappointments, the Colliers seem to have decided that the government wouldn't take them seriously unless they showed real intention to harm the land; so last year they moved forward with a dramatic plan to prospect for oil and gas, which would start by detonating dynamite in 14,700 newly drilled holes across 27,000 acres of Big Cypress National Preserve in the Everglades. That finally caught the attention of environmentalists, who began a crusade to force the government to pay the Colliers not to drill.

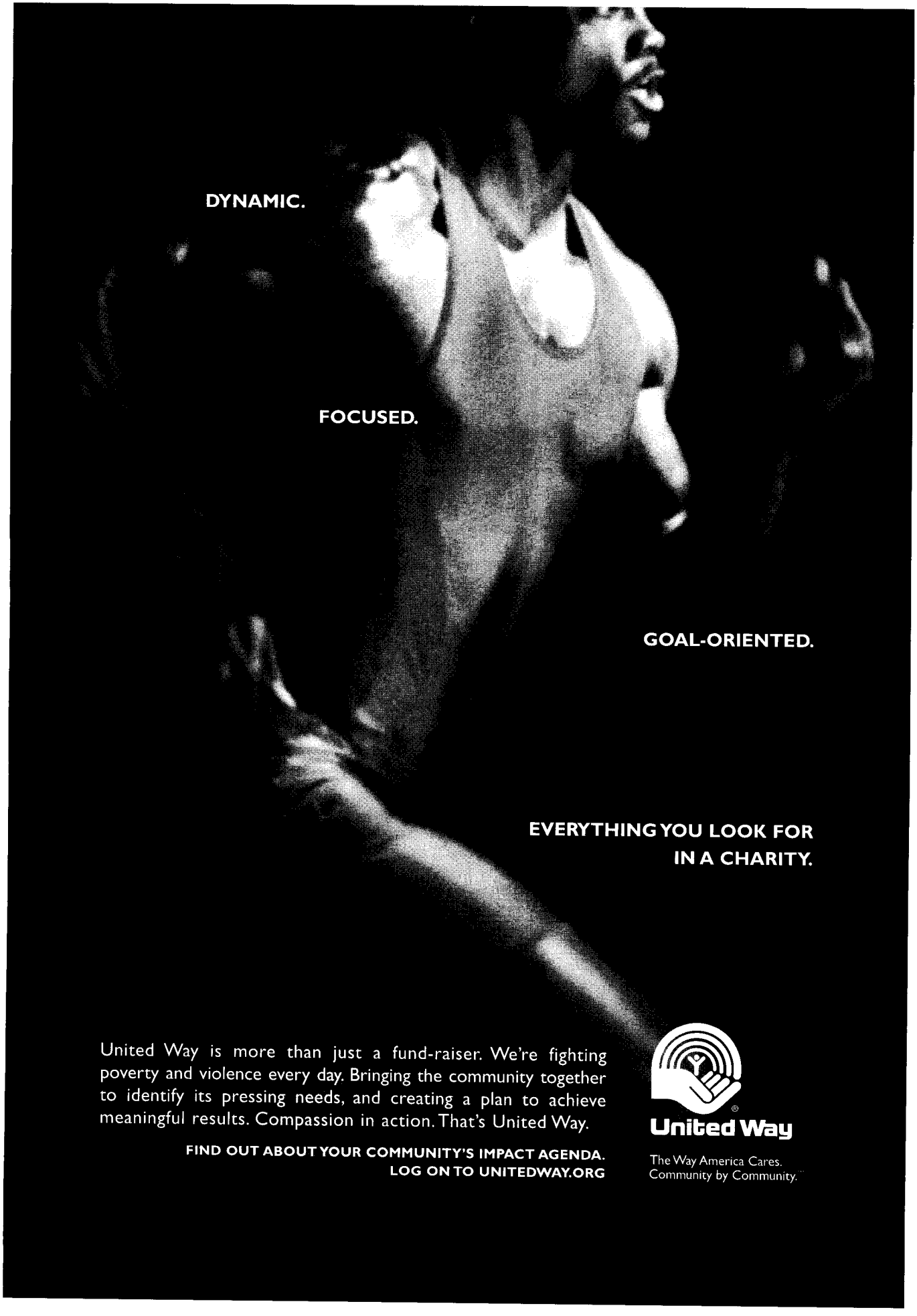
MEANWHILE, BETWEEN 1997 and 2002 the Collier family's companies gave about $110,000 to the Republican Party of Florida and to Jeb's campaigns. When George W. took office last year the Department of Interior, prodded by Jeb, reinvigorated negotiations with the family. If Congress approves the deal, the Colliers will get $120 million for highly speculative leases that, due to onerous regulations, were probably never worth exploring in the first place. The sale does nothing to stop the oil operations that are actually underway in Big Cypress and will actually *increase* drilling in the Gulf because the Interior Department wants to pay the Colliers with credits for Gulf leases. But this won't be Florida's problem: Since the Bushes have pushed most Gulf drilling away from Florida's beaches, any leases given to the Colliers will presumably be off the coasts of Alabama, Mississippi, and/or Louisiana. In Florida, where no environmental issue is more important to the state's increasingly eco-conscious voters than oil drilling, the deal was hailed as an enormous victory for Jeb.

It's not only oil speculators who are profiting from the administration's politically motivated Sunshine State environmentalism. Last year the Energy Department funded a $37.4 million grant to spur development of new technologies for environmental cleanup. Almost 30 percent of the money went to Florida, mostly to little-known Florida International University (FIU) in Miami. The university's president, Cuban-American Modesto Maidique, is a longtime supporter of the Bush family and sits on the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB)—one of those obscure government panels that presidents fill with patronage hires. One can only speculate what advice the panel may have offered Secretary Abraham. But according to an Energy Department official, Abraham's office has sent out a request to Energy staffers to come up with a proposal for another $3 million in funding to FIU. "Congress never thought we were going to design a program for Florida to help the president's brother get elected," says the official, adding, in his words, that staffers have been told: "If you want to do a new initiative, and you want to get funding for it, you better show how it's going to help a state that was close in 2000, like Florida. Obviously, the word is out to help Jeb any way you can."

ONE MIGHT IMAGINE Jeb Bush would downplay the extent to which federal policy and taxpayer dollars are being driven by his electoral needs. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Read through the hundreds of press releases his office has issued over the last 18 months, and you realize that Jeb is selling himself to Florida voters on the premise that he can leverage resources and favors from his brother's administration. Rather than denying the politicization of the budget process, Jeb plays it up. For instance, in February when the U.S. Department of Agriculture released $52.4 million in rural development aid to Florida, the governor's office bragged that the funds—which are supposed to be awarded following a careful review process—were granted after a meeting between Jeb and Secretary Veneman. Likewise, in May he boasted that the INS had changed its policy on international air travelers in response to his personal request. He is running on his influence. "I know someone in Washington," he likes to say.

And why shouldn't he? The beauty of it for Jeb is that all Florida Democrats can do is grit their teeth and express grudging support for the money flowing into their state. After all, they want to protect their state's environment, secure education dollars, win homeland security funds, and help out its small businesses, too; they can hardly argue that federal dollars should go somewhere else. The real surprise is that thus far national Democrats and the media have given so little scrutiny to the president's efforts to aid his brother's campaign—the kind of scrutiny, for example, that accompanied Bill and Hillary in 2000. If that changes, who knows what intimate treasures they'll find. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


DYNAMIC.
FOCUSED.
GOAL-ORIENTED.
EVERYTHING YOU LOOK FOR
IN A CHARITY.
United Way is more than just a fund-raiser. We're fighting poverty and violence every day. Bringing the community together to identify its pressing needs, and creating a plan to achieve meaningful results. Compassion in action. That's United Way.
FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMPACT AGENDA.
LOG ON TO UNITEDWAY.ORG
United Way
The Way America Cares.
Community by Community.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Sex and Self

One sort of film, plentiful enough by now to be called a genre, is a mixture of film and theater. The concert film—so it is called—presents a stand-up comic standing up, before an audience. The concert films of Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy were theater performances at which some cameras were running. The audience, with its laughter and applause, is itself part of the genre, a factor in the creation of the film, especially when the material is raw. (Spalding Gray filmed two of his solo pieces without an audience, not unsuccessfully, but he is not a comic and his material is not raw.) Of course in a theater performance of any kind the audience is in some measure a collaborator, but the concert film takes this theater matter into another stratum. This is the only film species in which an audience *in the film* is essential. The audience creates a symbiosis with the performer, something like an orchestra accompanying a singer.

Consider: the idea of a stand-up comic playing only to a camera, though it probably has happened, seems impoverished, almost ghostly. Not only is that earlier audience part of the show, but when the material is raunchy, the audience's responses certify the film. It's not that we need that audience's approval; but the laughter and the applause are nudges toward the date, the year, the very moment of the society we are in. The whole occasion, comprising the comic and two audiences, reminds us that this performance, like just about everything else these days, is a brief pause in continual transition.

Margaret Cho's work is a perfect instance. Her latest picture, which is her second, is **Notorious C.H.O.** (Wellspring). It was filmed in a Seattle theater last winter, and it crystallizes a social moment. Yet the originating reason for the film's being is not societal, it is Cho. Her talent. She is a clever mime, vocally ingenious, scalpel-sharp in her timing, with blithe self-confidence, and with an odd combination of casualness and intent that is very quickly engaging. Her subject is sex—her own sexual life, which is prodigiously varied; her observations of others' sex lives; her fantasies, her frustrations. Sex is more than her subject: it is her observation post, her stance, her agency.

Cho is a plump, thirtyish Korean-American whose face is not in itself distinguished but becomes a slow-motion kaleidoscope as she works. She wastes no time in defining her terrain and her tone. At the start she tells the audience that she is just back from stricken New York, that she visited Ground Zero, and that she fellated all the salvage workers. (Not her verb.) So, less than a minute into her act, she announces that we can choose to be offended or not, but that she is going to treat everything—matters serious and less so—in the style of Margaret Cho.

In the following hour and a half she takes us through her upbringing, her friendships with homosexual men and women, her sex with them and with a number of straight men, her relations with her parents (an agreeable couple who are interviewed briefly before her act begins and who accept her as she is), her views on sexual prejudices, selfhood, marriage. (One point of possible import: she never utters the word "love.")

What is chiefly memorable about her film, other than her talent, is its popular acceptance. Cho performs frequently in clubs and in theaters here and abroad, but those appearances, compared with film, are private. Her Seattle audience, we are told, was largely gay and lesbian, and thus was favorably sensitized to much of her material and opinion. I do not know whether her audiences are homosexual in the same measure wherever she plays, but she makes us think that, for all of us, the raunchy concert film has become a valuable social index and chronicle. (Porno films are a different subject—in a certain sense much less daring, because the audience attends for one blatant reason.) Aristophanes told us in *The Clouds*, "Remember—nothing's shameful." Margaret Cho, with her unblinking serenity and her sharp mode, is putting him to the test. And the genre will go on, with her and with others. If Aristophanes were curious about his sway today, he would need only to look at the concert films of the last twenty-five years.

My Wife Is an Actress (Sony Pictures Classics) is a French comedy that deals with a question we have all asked, consciously or not. What is it like to be the spouse of a performer who, on stage or screen, makes torrid love with another performer? Yvan Attal, the author, director, and leading actor of this picture, has said: "This is the only job in the world where you spend the day in bed with another woman and you return home and pretend nothing has happened and ask, 'What's for dinner?' " An added fillip here: the screen spouses are off-screen spouses as well, and Attal has cast his wife as the actress-wife, the one who spends the day in bed with someone else. Attal attests that this story is not biographical. Fine: but neither, in human tempering, can it be complete invention.

Attal was born in Tel Aviv in 1965 and grew up in France, where he lives and works. He began his acting career in a 1989 film and has been busy ever since. He is short, intelligent, and funny, so he has often been compared to Woody Allen. Nonsense: Attal can act. This picture is his first direction of a feature, and he has learned well from many light-fingered French directors of the past. If he were a chef, he would be good with pastry.

Charlotte Gainsborough, who plays and is his actress-wife, is the daughter of a producer and the Paris-based English actress Jane Birkin. Gainsborough made her acting debut at twelve and has grown up in and with French film. She is one of those actors who cannot help surprising us pleasantly. At first glance she promises little, but she soon becomes attractive, volatile, appealing.

Attal plays a Parisian sportswriter whose wife is doing very well in her profession. Much as he loves her, her success sometimes abrades. A traffic cop stops their car for a violation and is about to write a ticket when he spots the driver's wife. The cop smiles and waves the car on. Attal phones for a restaurant reservation and fails; but Gainsborough gets one immediately. Etc.

The real clutch comes when Gainsborough signs on for a film to be made in London, playing opposite Terence Stamp. The white-haired Stamp was not much of a heartthrob in his career but is now stunning. The film star whom he plays is gentle and charming, which makes the husband's jealousy and suspicion worse. He slips back and forth from Paris to London—the Channel train affects dramaturgy here as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

markedly as did, in the past, the automobile and the airplane—and matters percolate. His life is further jostled with his married sister's trouble. She is Jewish, her husband is Gentile, and the subject of their baby's circumcision puts still another penile phantom in the gallery.

My Wife Is an Actress is the best kind of fizz. The bubbles are not fake; they come from a genuine ferment. ■

After Victory

By TONY JUDT

Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East by Michael B. Oren

(Oxford University Press, 446 pp., $30)

I.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO this summer, in one of the shortest wars in modern history, Israel confronted and destroyed the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, established itself as a regional superpower, and definitively re-configured the politics of the Middle East and much else besides. Since we are still living with its consequences, the Six Day War itself seems somehow familiar. Its immediacy is reinforced by the presence today at the head of Israel's government of one of the generals who played an important part in the victory in 1967, and by the salience of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (occupied in the course of the campaign) in contemporary international politics. The detailed implications of Israel's lightning victory are etched into our daily news.

In truth, however, 1967 was a very long time ago. Hitler had been dead just twenty-two years, and the state of Israel itself had not yet celebrated its twentieth anniversary. The overwhelming majority of today's Israeli citizens were not yet born or not yet Israelis. Nineteen years after its birth, the country was still shaped by its origins in turn-of-the-century Labor Zionism. The only leaders whom Israel had known were men and women of the Second Aliyah, the Russian and Polish immigrants of the first years of the twentieth century; and the country was still utterly dominated by that founding generation and its sensibilities. A time traveler returning to Israel in 1967 must traverse not just time, but also space: in many crucial respects the country still operated, as it were, on Bialystok time.

This had implications for every dimension of Israeli life. The kibbutzim, curious communitarian progeny of an unlikely marriage of Marx and Kropotkin, dominated the cultural landscape no less than the physical one. Even though it was already clear to some observers that the country's future lay in technology, in industry, and in towns, the self-description of Israel drew overwhelmingly on a socialist realist image of agrarian pioneers living in semi-autarkic egalitarian communes. Most of the country's leaders, beginning with David Ben-Gurion himself, were members of a kibbutz. Kibbutzim were attached to national movements that were affiliated with political parties, and all of them reflected, to the point of caricature, their fissiparous European heritage, splitting and re-splitting through the years along subtle doctrinal fault lines.

Political conversation in Israel in those years thus echoed and recapitulated the vocabulary and the obsessions of the Second International, circa 1922. Labor Zionism was sub-divided over issues of dogma and politics (in particular the question of Socialist Zionism's relationship to communism) in ways that might have seemed obsessive and trivial to outsiders but were accorded respectful attention by the protagonists. Laborites of various hues could indulge such internecine squabbles because they had a monopoly of power in the country. There were some religious parties, and above all there were also the "Revisionists," the heirs of Vladimir Jabotinsky and his nationalist followers, now incarnated in Menachem Begin's Herut party (the forerunner of today's Likud). But the latter were in a permanent minority; and anyway it is significant that Begin and his like were still referred to disparagingly as "revisionist," as though it were the doctrinal schisms of the early twentieth century that still determined the colors and the contours of Israeli politics.

THERE WERE OTHER aspects of Israeli life and Zionist education that echoed the founders' European roots. On the kibbutz where I spent much time in the mid-1960s, a fairly representative agricultural community in the Upper Galilee affiliated with one of the splinter parties to the left of the main Labor Party (Mapai), the concerns of the early Zionists were still very much alive. The classical dilemmas of applied socialism were debated endlessly. Should an egalitarian community impose sameness? Is it sufficient to distribute resources equally to all participants, allowing them to dispose of these according to preference, or is preference itself ultimately divisive and taste best imposed uniformly by the collective? How far should the cash nexus be allowed into the community? Which resources and activities are communal in their essence, which private?

The dominant tone on the kibbutz and in the country was provincial and puritanical. I was once earnestly reprimanded by a kibbutz elder for singing "inappropriate" popular songs, that is, the latest Beatles hits; and Zionist education went to great lengths to encourage intra-community fellow feeling and affection among the young while eviscerating it of any hint of the erotic. The prevailing ethos, with its faith in the redemptive value of Land and Labor, its scout-like clothing and communal dances, its desert hikes and dutiful ascents of Masada (the hard way, of course), its lectures on botany and biblical geography, and its earnest weekly discussion of socialist "issues," represented nothing so much as a transposition into the Middle East of the preoccupations and mores of the Independent Labour Party of 1890s Britain, or the *Wandervogel* walking clubs of late Wilhelminian Germany.

Not surprisingly, Arabs figured very little in this world. In discussions of the writings of Ber Borochov and the other iconic texts of Labor Zionism, much attention was of course paid to the question of "exploitation." But in accordance with the Marxist framework in which all such debates were couched, "exploitation" was restricted in its meaning to the labor theory of value: you exploit someone

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

else by employing them, remunerating them at the minimum required to keep them working productively, and pocketing the difference as profit. Accordingly, as seen from the perspective of kibbutz-based Labor Zionists, to hire Arabs (or anyone else) for wages was to exploit them. This had been the subject of animated practical quarrels as well as doctrinal arguments among kibbutz members—historically it was part of what distinguished kibbutzim from the labor-employing village cooperatives, or moshavim. But beyond such rather abstruse considerations, which were of little relevance to the real Israeli economy, relations between Jews and Arabs were not much discussed.

It is easy, looking back, to see in this curious oversight the source of our present troubles. And critics of the whole Zionist project are quick to remark that this refusal to engage with the presence of Arabs was the original sin of the Zionist forefathers, who consciously turned away from the uncomfortable fact that the virgin landscape of unredeemed Zion was already occupied by people who would have to be removed if a Jewish state was ever to come about. It is true that a few clear-sighted observers, notably Ahad Ha'am, had drawn attention to this dilemma and its implications, but most had ignored it. And yet I do not believe that the matter was quite so simple, to judge from my own recollection of the last years of the old Zionism. Many Israelis of that time rather prided themselves on their success in living peacefully alongside Arab neighbors within the national borders. Far from deliberately denying the Arab presence, they boasted of their acquaintance with Arabs, and especially with Druze and Bedouins. They encouraged the young to familiarize themselves with local Arab society no less than with the flora and the fauna of the landscape.

But that, of course, is just the point. For pre-1967 Zionists, Arabs were a part of the physical setting in which the state of Israel had been established, but they were decidedly not part of the mental template, the Israel-of-the-mind, through which most Israelis saw their politics and their environment. Taking the Jews out of Europe did not take Europe out of the Jews. Notwithstanding the presence of Yemenite and North African Jews, condescendingly tolerated by the Ashkenazi majority, Israel in 1967 was a European country in all but name. The country was born of a European project, and it was geographically and sociologically configured by the vagaries of European history. Its laws were shaped by European precedent, its leaders and ideologists were marinated in late-nineteenth-century European socialism and nationalism.

However much they had consciously turned their backs on Europe—and a significant proportion of the adult population of that time consisted of concentration-camp survivors with few fond memories of the old continent—Israelis were European to the core. I do not just mean the German-speaking Jews on Mount Carmel who reproduced every little detail of life in late-Habsburg Vienna and never bothered to learn Hebrew, or the English-speaking Jews drinking tea, eating fruitcake, and playing cricket in Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi; I am speaking about the whole country.

COURTESY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Israeli civilians digging trenches before the outbreak of the war

The result was an uncomfortable tension in Israeli sensibilities. A part of the Zionist enterprise was the wholehearted commitment to Zion, after all. It entailed a root-and-branch rejection of the old world: its assumptions, its comforts, its seductions. At first, this had been a choice; later, thanks to Hitler, Zionism became an urgent necessity. The European Jews who ended up in Palestine after 1945 were committed to adapting to life in a small state of their own making in far Western Asia. But the process of adaptation had not advanced very far by the mid-1960s, and Arabs (like the Middle East in general) were simply not at the center of most Israelis' concerns. There was nothing particularly anti-Arab about this. As I recall, many Israelis were just as prejudiced against local Jews from North Africa or the Near East as they were against Arabs, and perhaps more so.

II.

THE SIX DAY WAR was to change all that, utterly. And yet, for all its lasting consequences, there was nothing particularly unusual about the origin of the conflict. Like its predecessor, the Suez War of 1956, the war of 1967 is best regarded in the light in which Israel's generals saw it at the time: as unfinished business left over from the War of Independence. None of the parties to that earlier conflict was happy with the outcome, and all regarded the 1948 armistice as temporary. Although Israel had succeeded in expanding its borders beyond those of the original partition, it was still left with what were regarded, in the military calculations of the time, as virtually indefensible frontiers.

In the course of the early 1950s, the Egyptians encouraged guerrilla incursions across Israel's southern border, inviting regular retaliation from Israel, whose military had by 1955 decided to provoke Cairo into open conflict. In October 1956, taking advantage of Anglo-French alarm at Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalist ambitions, Israel conspired with Paris and London to mount an attack on Egypt. Although initially successful, the campaign was cut short under pressure from Moscow and Washington. The European powers were humiliated, and Israel was obliged to withdraw back to the 1948 line.

In these circumstances Israel was as insecure and vulnerable as ever. Acknowledging this, the United States undertook to guarantee that the Straits of Tiran, leading from the Red Sea to Eilat, Israel's port on the Gulf of Aqaba, would henceforth be kept open. In the meantime United Nations forces were to be stationed along the Egypt-Israel frontier, and also at Sharm-el-Sheikh, at the entrance to the Straits on the southeastern tip of the Sinai peninsula. Thereafter the Egyptian frontier was quiet, and it was Syria—whose Ba'athist leaders nursed ambitions to displace Nasser at the head of Arab radicalism—that emerged in the early 1960s as Israel's chief antagonist.

In addition to providing hospitality to Palestinian irregulars raiding across Israel's northeast borders or through Jor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dan, Damascus had various well-attested plans to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River. Largely for this reason, Israeli strategists had by 1967 come to regard Syria as the main short-term threat to national security. From the Golan Heights above the Sea of Galilee, Syria could and did target Israeli kibbutzim and villages; and it was a destabilizing influence on neighboring states, Jordan especially. Still, it was Nasser's Egypt that had by far the larger armed forces. Were Israel seriously to entertain going to war with Syria, it would inevitably have first to neutralize the threat from its historic enemy to the south.

THERE IS GOOD reason to believe now that the chain of events leading to the outbreak of war on June 5 began with at least a partial misunderstanding. Frustrated by Syrian obduracy and the continuing cross-border attacks on frontier kibbutzim, Israeli jets struck Syrian targets in the spring of 1967. In April, Israeli generals (including Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin) publicly threatened Damascus with worse to come if the border harassments did not stop. Rabin himself seems to have favored toppling the Syrian regime, but Prime Minister Levi Eshkol felt otherwise: Syria was a client state of the Soviet Union, and Eshkol had no desire to provoke the Russians. He was not alone in his assessment. The former Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan, not yet in the government, is quoted by Michael B. Oren as regretting Rabin's outburst: "He who sends up smoke signals has to understand that the other side might think there's really a fire."

And that, in effect, is what happened. Russian intelligence misconstrued Israeli intentions and secretly advised the Syrians that the Israelis were planning to attack—an interpretation given some plausibility by Rabin's broadcast threats, widely commented upon in the foreign press. The Syrians duly informed Cairo. Nasser had no immediate plans to go to war with Israel, for whose military he had a well-founded respect; but he felt constrained to offer public backing for Syria or else lose standing in the Arab world. In practice, such backing took the conventional and not unfamiliar form of bombastic public expressions of full support for Damascus and grand promises to confront Israel at some unspecified future date.

So far, so commonplace. What ratcheted the crisis from rhetoric into war was Nasser's grandstanding demand, on May 17, that U.N. forces be withdrawn from Gaza. The Egyptian dictator almost certainly calculated thus: either the United Nations would do his bidding and withdraw, giving him a cost-free and highly visible public success, or else it would refuse the request and Egypt would score a moral victory as the aggrieved party. Nasser surely did not anticipate the reaction of the U.N.'s ineffective Secretary-General U Thant, which was to order the immediate withdrawal of all U.N. troops the following day not just from Gaza but from the whole Sinai peninsula.

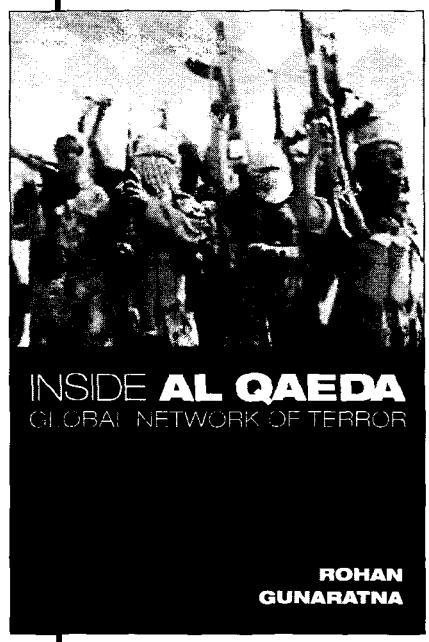
There is some reason to think that Nasser would have preferred that U.N. troops not be withdrawn from Sharm-el-Sheikh. He could hardly be seen to regret U Thant's strange decision, which in practice returned all of Sinai to Egyptian control, but it put him in a predicament. He was obliged to move Egyptian armies forward to the Israeli border and down to Sharm-el-Sheikh, which he duly did; but with Egyptian soldiers once again stationed across from the island of Tiran, Nasser could not resist the temptation, on May 22, to announce that once again the Straits were closed to all Israel-bound shipping, as they had been in the early 1950s.

From this point on, as Nasser probably realized, war would be hard to avoid. From the outside Nasser's moves seemed self-evidently the prelude to a declaration of war; and in any case the closing of the Straits of Tiran was itself, for Israel, a *casus belli*. Surrounded by enemies, and accessible from the outside only by air and sea, Israel had once again lost its vital link to the Red Sea and beyond. But even so, as Foreign Minister Abba Eban explained at the time, what mattered was not so much the Straits themselves but Israel's deterrent capacity, which would lose all credibility if the country accepted Nasser's blockade without a fight.

Still, Israeli diplomats tried at first to bring international pressure to bear on Egypt to re-open the Straits; and at the same time they asked the Great Powers openly to express their backing for Israel's response. The British and the French refused point blank, De Gaulle confining himself to a warning against any preemptive Israeli strike and an embargo on all French arms deliveries to Israel. (This was a time when the Israeli air force was overwhelmingly dependent on French-made Mirage and Mystère jet fighters.)

The Americans were a bit more sympathetic. Lyndon Johnson tried unsuccessfully to round up support for an international convoy of merchant ships to "run" the Straits and to call Egypt's bluff. He assured Eshkol and Eban of American sympathy, and of American backing in the event of an unprovoked attack on Israel. But more he could not give, despite John Foster Dulles's guarantee in 1957; in the mood of the time, he pleaded, Congress would not allow an American president

What's **Next?**



The definitive account of the ideology, structure, strategies, and tactics of Al Qaeda. The product of five years of worldwide research, including interviews with members, *Inside Al Qaeda* sheds crucial new light on the group's role in funding and engineering terrorist plots around the world, and on the continuing threat it poses.

"Gunaratna is one of the few qualified to talk with authority about Al Qaeda, . . . an excellent book." —*London Sunday Times*

"[Gunaratna] is the foremost English-speaking expert on the terror network." —Dan Rather, CBS Evening News

"Excellent." —Wolf Blitzer, CNN

To hear Rohan Gunaratna discussing *Inside Al Qaeda*, call BOOKTALK at 888-355-0600, code #2243

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
columbia.edu/cu/cup

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

openly to back Israeli aggression, however justified. Privately, his military experts assured Johnson that the Israelis had little to fear: given the freedom to "shoot first," they would win within a week. But to Eshkol, Johnson merely announced that "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go it alone."

That, of course, is what Israel did. The Israeli military, with Dayan newly installed by popular demand as defense minister, resented being made to wait for two long weeks of "phony war," but Eshkol's diplomatic strategy surely paid dividends. The Soviet Union put considerable pressure on Egypt not to start a war, but with rather greater success—at the end of May, at the last minute, Nasser abandoned a plan to attack Israel first, and he seems to have assumed that the crisis he had half-reluctantly set in motion had been defused. Israel, meanwhile, was seen to have tried every diplomatic means to avert a fight—even though most Israeli leaders and all the generals were now committed to war unless Nasser re-opened the Straits, which they rightly assumed he would not do.

The American military experts who anticipated an easy Israeli victory were well-informed, but they were in a minority. Many civilian Israelis feared the worst. From President 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad 'Aref of Iraq ("Our goal is clear—we shall wipe Israel off the face of the map. We shall, God willing, meet in Tel Aviv and Haifa") to Palestinian leader Ahmed al-Shuqayri ("We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants and as for the survivors—if there are any—the boats are ready to deport them"), Arab leaders appeared united in their determination to demolish the Jewish state. Their threats seemed credible enough: between them, the armies of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and their friends comprised some nine hundred combat planes, five thousand tanks, and half a million men. At best the Israelis had one-quarter that number of planes, one-fifth the tanks, and only 275,000 men.

THE STORY OF the war itself is well known. On June 5, Day One, Israeli planes struck first and demolished much of the Egyptian air force on the ground, destroying 286 combat planes and killing nearly one-third of Egypt's pilots. On Days Two and Three, the Israeli army shattered or dispersed the bulk of the Egyptian armed forces in Sinai, thanks in large measure to Israel's complete domination of the skies. Meanwhile, ignoring Eshkol's invitation to stay out of the war, Jordan's King Hussein—believing that his survival depended upon his being seen to join the struggle against Israel—aligned himself with the Arab coalition ("the hour of decision has arrived"). In the ensuing battles the Israelis, after some hard fighting, seized all of Jerusalem and Jordanian territory west of the Jordan River.

By the end of Day Four, the war was effectively over. At the United Nations, the United States and the major European powers (including the Soviet Union) had from the outset been pressing urgently for a cease-fire as the Israelis had anticipated: when the war began, Abba Eban estimated that the Israeli armed forces would have at most seventy-two hours before the superpowers intervened. But the Egyptians rejected a cease-fire—their ambassador at the United Nations, Mohammad El Kony, was assured from Cairo that things were going well for the Arabs and that time was on their side; and he in turn blithely reassured his Soviet counterpart Nikolai Federenko that the Israelis were bluffing and that the planes they had destroyed were plywood decoys.

COURTESY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Egyptian wreckage in the Mitla Pass

The Israelis were lucky, and they knew it: had the Egyptians accepted a U.N. cease-fire on June 6, when it was first proposed, instead of on June 8, when Nasser finally acknowledged the extent of the catastrophe, they might have saved at least part of their army, and Israel would never have occupied the Old City of Jerusalem or the West Bank. Once the cease-fire was agreed (and Israel could hardly oppose it, having fought what was officially a "preemptive defensive war"), Dayan took a snap decision on his own initiative to attack Syria—the real object of Israeli concern—before the cease-fire could take effect. This incurred the enduring wrath of Moscow and ran the risk of undoing the benefits of all Eban's painstaking prewar diplomatic maneuvers, but it paid off. After some tough hours on the slopes of the Golan, the Israelis overran the Syrian defenses and literally raced to Quneitra to occupy the Heights themselves before time ran out.

The scale of Israel's victory was unprecedented and took some time for all the parties fully to appreciate. Egyptian losses alone amounted to perhaps fifteen thousand men and eighty-five percent of the country's pre-war military hardware. Between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand Arabs fled Gaza and the West Bank into exile, many of them already refugees from 1948. Israel now controlled land covering an area four and a half times its pre-war size, from the Jordan to the Suez Canal, from the Lebanese uplands to the Red Sea. The fighting had not been quite so one-sided as the brevity of the war and its outcome might suggest—had it not been for their utter superiority in the air, the Israelis might have been quite closely matched, especially by some of the Jordanian units and the best Egyptian divisions; but it was the result that counted. One outcome of the war, certainly the most important from the Israeli perspective, was this: no responsible Arab leader would ever again seriously contemplate the military destruction of the Jewish state.

III.

MICHAEL B. OREN, in his new history of the war, tells the story in gripping detail. He has done an immense amount of research in many sources, Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and English, and although his narrative is keyed to the Israeli perspective, this produces no significant distortion. The Egyptian and Jordanian viewpoints are acknowledged, and Israel's responsibility for pre-war misunderstandings and wartime errors (notably the bombing of the American ship *Liberty*) is given reasonable prominence. One particular virtue of Oren's book is that it pays full attention to the international dimension of the conflict, especially the concerns and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

actions of the two superpowers. This allows Oren to set what was in one sense a very local war into its wider context: the war nearly did not happen thanks to international efforts at prevention, and it certainly would not have been allowed to go on much longer, as the Israelis fully understood.

Oren is good, too, on some of the personalities of the time, especially the Israelis, for whom I think he has a better feel. The stories of Rabin's near-breakdown on the eve of battle, of Dayan's rakish duplicity, of Nasser's horror at the scale of his defeat, are all skillfully told. Some, such as Yigal Allon, the hawkish leader of the left-leaning Achdut Ha'Avodah Party and the sometime hero of the Independence War, come off badly: hungry for battle, eager for territory, loath to relinquish any land in exchange for peace. Others, such as the much underestimated Levi Eshkol, receive a distinct boost in their reputation. It was Eshkol who admonished General Ariel Sharon (when Sharon offered to destroy the Egyptian army "for a generation") that "nothing will be settled by a military victory. The Arabs will still be here." And it was Eshkol who asked his military adviser Yigal Yadin, the day after the lightning conquest of the West Bank: "Have you thought yet about how we can live with so many Arabs?" (Yadin's reply is not recorded.)

And yet Oren's book, for all its great learning and vivid writing, is somehow unsatisfactory. This is not because of his weakness for verbal infelicities: we read of someone seeking to "palliate the Syrians," that "Hussein was once again caught between clashing rocks," and so forth. Nor is it because Oren's grasp grows insecure as he moves beyond the Middle East: France in 1956 assuredly did not conspire with Israel because its government "shared Israel's socialist ideals" (how then account for the co-conspiratorial enthusiasm of Britain's Conservative leaders?); and it was President Eisenhower's economic arm-twisting, not Marshall Bulganin's empty threat to "use missiles," that brought the Suez War to an abrupt end. These slips suggest that Oren may be out of his depth in the broader currents of international history, but they do not vitiate his project.

The problem lies in the project itself. Oren announces at the outset that he plans to put the Six Day War back in its context, and to present its origins and its outcome in such a manner that they will never be looked at in the same way again. And with respect to the origins he does indeed offer a comprehensive, if narrowly diplomatic, account. The story of the war itself is very well told, and for its source base alone this book should now be considered the standard work of reference. Yet neither the origins nor the war come across, at least to this reader, in any strikingly novel way. More thorough than previous accounts, to be sure. Better documented, certainly. Better balanced than many previous histories, no question. But different? Not really.

As for the long-term outcome of the most fateful week in modern Middle Eastern history, Oren does not even begin to engage it. To be fair, any serious attempt at assessing the war's consequences would require another book. But the main consequences of Israel's victory can be summarized fairly succinctly. There was a widespread belief among Arab commentators, swiftly communicated to the Arab "street," that the United States and Britain had helped Israel—how else could its air force have achieved such dazzling successes? This prepared the way for a significant increase in anti-American sentiment across the region, a change of mood that proved lasting and with the consequences of which we are living still.

The ironic outcome is that whereas American public support for Israel in June 1967 had actually been rather lukewarm—Washington feared alienating moderate Arab opinion—the two countries did draw much closer thereafter. Israel was now a force to be reckoned with, a potential ally in an unstable region; and whereas in June 1967 Johnson's advisers had warned him against committing America openly to the Zionist cause, future administrations would have no such anxieties. With Arab states increasingly hostile, the United States had less to lose. France, meanwhile, released from the embarrassment of its imbroglio in Algeria, turned its back on the Jewish state (*"un peuple sûr de lui et dominateur,"* in De Gaulle's notorious phrase) and made the strategic decision to re-build its bridges to the Arab world.

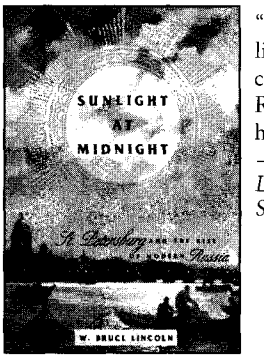
International public opinion also began to shift. Before the war, in Europe as well as the United States, only the far right and the far left were avowedly anti-Israel. Progressives and conservatives alike were sympathetic to Israel, the underdog seemingly threatened with imminent extinction. In some circles comparisons were drawn with the Civil War in Spain just thirty years earlier, with Israel cast as the legitimate republic besieged by aggressive dictators. Throughout Western Europe and North America, in South Africa and Australia, a significant effort was mounted from May 1967 to send volunteers to help Israel, if only by replacing in the fields the men called up to fight.

I played a very minor role in these events, returning in my own case from the

ESSENTIAL HISTORY

NOW IN PAPERBACK

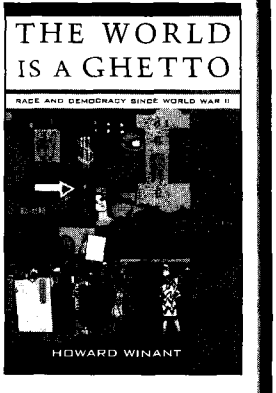
SUNLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT
St. Petersburg and the Rise of Modern Russia
W. Bruce Lincoln



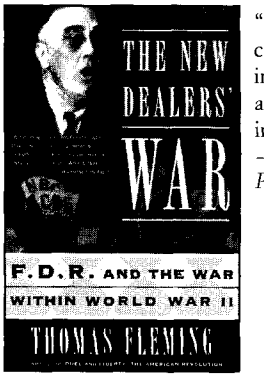
"Brings to life whole centuries of Russian history." —*Times Literary Supplement*

THE WORLD IS A GHETTO
Race and Democracy Since World War II
Howard Winant

"The most sophisticated and nuanced reading of the sociology of race I've ever seen." —Robin D. G. Kelley, New York University



THE NEW DEALERS' WAR
F.D.R. and the War Within World War II
Thomas Fleming



"Gripping, controversial, informative and at times infuriating." —*Washington Post*

BASIC BOOKS
A Member of the Perseus Books Group
www.basicbooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

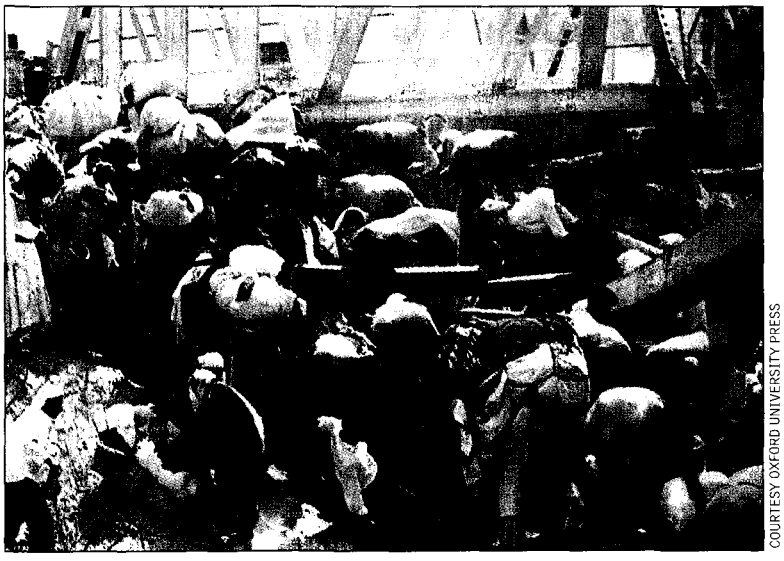
United Kingdom to Israel on the last commercial flight to land there before the outbreak of hostilities. Consequently I met a lot of these volunteers, in Europe and then in Israel. There were many non-Jews among them and most would have classed themselves as politically "left." With the trial of Eichmann and the Frankfurt trials of concentration-camp personnel a very recent memory, defending Israel became a minor international cause.

According to Abba Eban, speaking in the aftermath of victory, "Never before has Israel stood more honored and revered by the nations of the world." I am not sure that this was so. Israel was certainly respected in a new way. But the scale of its triumph actually precipitated a falling-away of support. Some might plausibly attribute this to the world's preference for the Jew as victim—and there was indeed a certain post-June discomfort among some of Israel's overseas sympathizers at the apparent ease with which their cause had triumphed, as though its legitimacy were thereby called retrospectively into question.

But there was more to it than that. The European Old Left had always thought of Israel, with its long-established Labor leaders, its disproportionately large public sector, and its communitarian experiments, as "one of us." In the rapidly shifting political and ideological currents of the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, Israel was something of an anomaly. The New Left, from Berlin to Berkeley, was concerned less with exploited workers and more with the victims of colonialism and racism. The goal was no longer the emancipation of the proletariat; it was rather the liberation of the third-world peasantry and what were not yet called "people of color." Kibbutzim retained a certain romantic aura for a few more years, but for hard-nosed Western radicals they were just collective farms and as such a mere variant of the discredited Soviet model. In defeating the Arab armies and occupying Arab land, Israel had drawn attention to itself in ways calculated to encourage New Left antipathy, at just the moment when hitherto disparate radical constituencies—Ulster Catholics, Basque nationalists, Palestinian exiles, German extra-Parliamentarians, and many others—were finding common cause.

As for the conventional right, through the 1950s and 1960s it enthusiastically took Israel's side against Nasser—the bête noire of every Western government, Raymond Aron's "Hitler on the Nile." With Nasser thoroughly humiliated, however, and with the colonial era retreating into memory, many European conservatives lost interest in Israel and sought instead to curry favor among its oil-producing neighbors: before the energy crisis of 1973, but especially afterwards.

In a variety of ways, then, the international context after 1967 turned increasingly unfavorable for Israel, despite, and even because of, its dramatic victory. Yet the most important change of all, the transformation that would color all of Israel's dealings with the rest of the world, took place in the country itself. Relieved of any serious threat, ostensibly sufficient unto themselves, Israelis became complacent. The attitude of Yael Dayan, addressing her diary as the war ended, is quite typical: "The new reality in the Middle East presented Israel as the strongest element, and as such it can talk a different language and had to be talked to differently." The prickly insecurity that characterized the country in its first two decades changed to a self-satisfied arrogance.



COURTESY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Palestinians fleeing across the Jordan River

From 1967 until the shock of the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Israel was "dizzy with success." The apparent ease of the June victory led both the public and—less forgivably—the generals to believe that they were invincible. The image of the Israeli Defense Forces was burnished to a shine. Self-congratulatory (and implicitly contradictory) myths were espoused: that the Six Day War had been won with consummate ease thanks to the technical and cultural superiority of the Israeli forces; that the climactic battles (for Jerusalem, for the Golan) had seen heroic feats of soldiering against harsh odds.

Books such as Yael Dayan's *Israel Journal* reflected and nourished a widespread sense of spiritual superiority. Attached to Sharon's Southern Command during the war, she sneers at the contents of captured Egyptian officers' tents: thrillers, nylons, candies. "I knew what our officers' bedside tables contained. An Egyptian soldier would have found a few pens, writing paper, a few books and study matter—perhaps a book of poems." Comparing the two sides, Dayan concludes that the Egyptians had the material advantage, but "we had spiritual superiority."

Perhaps, perhaps not. As I recall Israeli junior officers' quarters on the Golan in the late summer of 1967, there were more pin-ups than poems. But from encounters with soldiers at the time I can confirm the astonishingly quick transition from quiet confidence to an air of overweening superiority. Sharon was not the only one to sweep his arm across the captured landscape and declare (in his case to Yael Dayan) that "all this is ours." And the new mood was reinforced by the appearance in fairly short order of a new kind of Israeli. The great victory of 1967 gave Zionism a shot in the arm, with a new generation of enthusiastic immigrants arriving from America especially; but these new Zionists brought with them not the old socialist texts of emancipation, redemption, and community, but rather a Bible and a map. For them, Israel's accidental occupation of Judea and Samaria was not a problem, it was a solution. In their religious and jingoistic eyes, the defeat of Israel's historical enemies was not the end of the story, but rather the beginning.

In many cases their aggressive nationalism was paired with a sort of born-again, messianic Judaism, a heady combination hitherto largely unknown in Israel. In the aftermath of the capture of Jerusalem, the chief rabbi of the army, Shlomo Goren, had proposed that the mosques on the Temple Mount be blown up. The general in command on the Jordanian front, Uzi Narkiss, had ignored him; but in years to come the voice of intolerant, ultra-religious Zionism would become more insistent and not so easy to turn away.

The demography of Israel was altered in other ways, too. In the aftermath of the Six Day War, Jews in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere were subjected to persecution and discrimination, and the rate of Jewish immigration to Israel from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Eagle, the Elk and the Warrior

One day, a Cheyenne warrior was hunting alone, on foot. He came upon an elk lying dead by the side of a stream. Trapped in the antlers of the fallen elk was a large spotted eagle. The eagle spoke to the hunter.

"Free me from here," the eagle said, "and I will give you a gift."

The warrior did as the eagle re-
elk's antlers and
the great bird flew
warrior, "Go over
and you will see your gift."

looked into
This

The Cheyenne Eagle Blanket is an interpretation of this legend as told by Ben Nighthorse Campbell. It employs traditional Cheyenne graphics and parfleche design elements to retell the story. This limited-edition saddle blanket, measuring 66" x 40", is the third in the Spirit Series of Native American Blankets. It is woven of pure wool by the Pendleton Woolen Mills for the American Indian College Fund.

Ben Nighthorse Campbell

Thanks to the generous donation of materials and time, 70% of the proceeds from the sale of this blanket go to fund our colleges and our scholarship programs. To learn more, call 1-800-880-5887 or visit our Web site at www.collegefund.org.

The eagle's gift was great because, at that time, a horse could mean the difference between a prosperous life and the struggle to stay alive.

Today, [illegible] same difference. The generous gift of your support helps our colleges thrive and our people grow.

American Indian College Fund

Educating the mind and spirit

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arab lands rose sharply. Hitherto it had been mostly confined to Jews expelled or fleeing from the newly independent states of the Maghreb; these continued to come, either directly or via France, but they were no longer a small minority of the overall population. These new Israelis not only did not share the political and cultural background of the earlier European immigrants. They had strong and distinctly unfriendly opinions about Arabs. After all, relations between Jews and Arabs in the places they had come from were often based on little more than mutual contempt. When the old Labor parties predictably failed to attract their support (or did not even bother to try), they turned to the erstwhile revisionists, whose chauvinist prejudices they could appreciate. The rise to power of Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, and their successors, literally unimaginable before June 1967, now became possible and even inexorable.

THIS WAS THE irony of the victory of 1967: it was the only war Israel ever won that gave the country a real chance to shape the Middle East to everyone's advantage, its own above all—but the very scale of the victory somehow robbed the country's leaders of imagination and initiative. The "overblown confidence" (this is Oren's apt phrase) after June 1967 led to the initial disasters of the Yom Kippur War of 1973, when, unable to imagine that Arab military planning was as good as their own intelligence suggested, the Israeli general staff was caught napping. That same misplaced confidence led Israel's politicians to let policy drift in the course of the 1970s, at a time when the initiative was still very much in their hands.

As for the occupied territories, Eshkol's question to Yadin remained unanswered. The habit of encouraging frontier settlements in the name of security—a building block of the original Yishuv (the Jewish community in pre-1948 Palestine) and the origin of many kibbutzim—made sense in the military circumstances of the 1930s. But half a century later it was an utter anachronism. It was in this context, however, that mainstream politicians connived, sometimes unwittingly, at the subsidized establishment in the West Bank of tens of thousands of religious and political extremists. Some politicians—Allon, Sharon—always intended to install a permanent Israeli presence on the captured lands. Others merely preferred not to oppose the mood of the hour.

Nobody thought much about how to remove the settlements when the time came to exchange land for peace, though it had been clear from the outset that come it would. On June 19, 1967, the Israeli cabinet secretly voted to accept the principle of returning occupied land in exchange for lasting peace. As Eshkol had noted when the war began: "Even if we conquer the Old City and the West Bank, in the end we will have to leave them."

It is easy to wax nostalgic for the old Israel, before the victories of 1967 and the disturbing changes they brought in their wake. The country may have had what some now refer to as "Auschwitz frontiers," but its identity within them was at least clear. Yet if the Jewish state was ever to be at home in the Middle East, to be the "normal" polity that its Zionist founders envisaged, then its curious European orientation, a time-space capsule in an alien continent, could not last. And there is no doubt that, for better or for worse, since June 1967 Israel has entered fully into the Middle Eastern world. It, too, has crazed clerics, religious devotees, nationalist demagogues, and ethnic cleansers. It is also, sadly, less secure than at any time in the past thirty-five years. The idea that Jews in Israel might lead their daily lives oblivious of the Arab world, as many did before 1967, is today tragically unthinkable.

Short of forcibly expunging the Arab presence from every inch of soil currently controlled by Israel, the dilemma facing Israel today is the same as it was in June 1967, when the aging David Ben-Gurion advised his fellow countrymen against remaining in the conquered territories. A historic victory can wreak almost as much havoc as a historic defeat. In Abba Eban's words, "The exercise of permanent rule over a foreign nation can only be defended by an ideology and rhetoric of self-worship and exclusiveness that are incompatible with the ethical legacy of prophetic Judaism and classical Zionism." The risk that Israel runs today is that for many of its most vocal defenders, Zionism has become such an "ideology and rhetoric of self-worship and exclusiveness" and not much more. In that case, Israel's brilliant victory of June 1967, already a classic in the annals of pre-emptive defensive warfare, will have borne bitter fruits for the losers and the winners alike. ■

Worlds Within Words

By ALAN TAYLOR

A Is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States by Jill Lepore

(Alfred A. Knopf, 241 pp., $25)

NATIONS, JILL LEPORE reminds us, are linguistic projects troubled by lingering divisions. In Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the creators of France, Spain, Germany, Greece, and Italy invented traditions of homogeneity in blood and culture. Nationalists defied and tried to suppress profound regional variations in culture, including language. To promote a new unity, they instituted centrally directed instruction in a single, systematized "national" language. Swabians and Bavarians became Germans as their schools taught *Hochdeutsch* (High German), the dialect of a northern province. In France, Bretons and Gascons had to learn Paris's language.

But the construction of nations through language rarely achieved closure. Although they were compelled to learn English, the Catholic Irish resented subordination within the British empire. Though they were indoctrinated in Castilian Spanish, the Catalans and the Basques clung to their own languages and their own dreams of autonomy. Closer to home, many Francophones pursue Quebec's secession from Canada's Anglophone majority. And our own Cassandras dread the growing numbers of American Hispanics as a linguistic threat to national unity. Newt Gingrich warns that America risks a Canadian division along cultural lines unless we renew, codify, and enforce the domination of English.

Although the particular fear of Spanish is relatively new, the anxiety over our linguistic bonds reaches back to our national origins in revolution. The English names

ALAN TAYLOR is a professor of American history at the University of California at Davis. His most recent book is *American Colonies* (Viking/Penguin).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and faces of the leading revolutionaries whom we call the Founding Fathers mislead our national memory to imagine a united people homogeneous in culture. Indeed, we usually credit our current ethnic and linguistic diversity entirely to nineteenth- and twentieth-century waves of immigrants. Yet English folk were but the largest minority in the ethnic mosaic of eighteenth-century America.

Although English in origins and government, the colonies had attracted (or dragooned) thousands of Scots, Scotch-Irish, Irish, Germans, Dutch, Swedes, Finns, Swiss, Welsh, Jews, French Huguenots, and enslaved Africans—to say nothing of Native Americans, who spoke several hundred distinct languages. In 1744, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, a Scottish immigrant, marveled at the diversity of Philadelphia: "I dined at a tavern with a very mixed company of different nations and religions. There were Scots, English, Dutch, Germans, and Irish; there were Roman Catholicks, Church men, Presbyterians, Quakers, Newlightmen, Methodists, Seventh day men, Moravians, Anabaptists, and one Jew." So American multiculturalism is by no means a recent invention. It has very old and deep roots. Working with census data, Lepore calculates that "the percentage of non-native English speakers in the United States was actually *greater* in 1790 than in 1990."

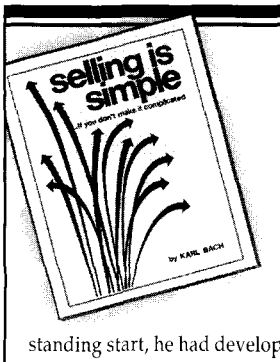
And so those English-named and English-speaking Founding Fathers worried about how to construct a unifying sense of nationalism among a diverse and contentious people recently drawn together and violently wrenched from the British empire. "If there is a country in the world where concord ... would be least expected," Thomas Paine explained, "it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable." In a peevish moment, Benjamin Franklin anticipated modern worriers by demanding: "Why should Pennsylvania founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?"

By recalling these fears, Lepore corrects the patriotic schoolbook version of the American Revolution, which depicts a homogeneous and united people led by supremely self-confident Anglophile demigods. She highlights, instead, the cultural divisions of Americans and the pervasive anxieties expressed by America's leaders between the Revolution and the Civil War. They worried that the new nation was too big and its people too different to hang together for long. They realized that American nationalism was new and fragile, more artifice than instinct, a product of cultural work rather than spontaneous outburst. By recovering the Founders' dread of division and their contentious struggles to create bonds of nation, Lepore renders them more human, more pertinent, and more familiar to us. It turns out that America has always been united by a cultural debate over differences.

For Noah Webster, a Yankee pedagogue and gadfly, the new nation could not endure without greater linguistic uniformity. "A national language is a national tie," he asked in 1786, "and what country wants it more than America?" English was the nation's principal language, already adopted, at least in part, by most of the recent immigrants and slaves. But as the language of the British empire, English linked Americans closely to their colonial past. Americans, Lepore writes, were "too much like the English and not enough like one another; Americans shared very little by way of heritage, custom, and manners, and what little they did share, they shared with England." To sever that linguistic tie to colonialism, some visionaries proposed making French, or even Greek or Hebrew, the new national language. But Webster regarded such proposals as both impractical and incomplete. In 1789, he asserted that "*language*, as well as government should be national. America should have her own distinct from all the world."

Webster's goal was twofold: a linguistic uniformity among the American people, North and South, and a linguistic distinction from the King's English. And so he proposed a new system of phonetic spelling that would, he insisted, dissolve sectional distinctions in pronunciation, while fomenting an ever-widening distinction from British English. "There iz no alternativ," he argued. Webster's more radical spelling proposals reaped scorn—one critic mocked the author as "No-ur Webster"—and so he subsequently watered them down, which helped him become the nation's most widely read and taught author. First issued in 1783, his patriotic *American Spelling Book* became standard in schools throughout the nation, selling ten million copies by 1829.

At the end of the 1850s, Jefferson Davis, then a United States senator from Mississippi, insisted that Webster had achieved his fondest dream of unifying the country. "Above all people we are one," Davis insisted. "And above all books which have



The most important book about salesmanship ever written ...

Selling is Simple...

by Karl Bach only $19.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

Karl Bach was a penniless and uneducated German-Jewish immigrant. He spoke very little English and, to top it off, he had a physical impediment. Not being able to get any other job, he enlisted as a Fuller Brush salesman. Within two months, he became the most productive salesman Fuller had ever had. From a standing start, he had developed irresistible sales techniques. He applied those methods and insights to the life insurance business. Within three years, he became one of the most successful life insurance producers in the US. He founded and became principal owner of the San Francisco Life Insurance Company, which eventually merged with the Philadelphia Life Insurance Company. He became a very, very wealthy man. In this book, Karl reveals his enormously successful salesmanship methods.

If you are in any area of selling, you should be able to at least quadruple your performance by reading this groundbreaking book and following its precepts. There is no reason why you shouldn't be as successful as Karl Bach -- you have so much more going for yourself than he did. We are the publishers of this book and can offer it for only $19.95. ***But we have an even better deal:** *Buy two books for $39.90 and we will send you a third one, with our compliments -- absolutely* FREE! If you are in any area of sales and want to multiply your performance and your income, you owe it to yourself to buy this book. You and your family will be glad you did. Order it today!

Order directly from the publisher by toll-free phone (800) 600-2777, by fax (415) 356-7804, or by mail. Mention order code **1094Y362** and give Visa/MC # and expiration date, or send check for $19.95. Add $4.95 shipping/insurance, plus sales tax for CA delivery. 30 days refund/return, except for shipping/insurance.

advance books
division of jomira/advance
470 Third St., #211, San Francisco, CA 94107

Order by toll-free phone: (800) 600-2777 or (fastest!) by fax: (415) 356-7804
Visit our website at www.haverhills.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

united us in the bond of a common language, I place the good old spelling book of Noah Webster." During the next decade, however, Davis presided over the Confederacy in the Civil War that killed more than half a million Americans. The dead included two of Webster's grandsons, who fought on opposite sides. As it turned out, no spelling book could compensate for the divisive power of slavery, which unraveled the union in more bloodshed that even the Founding Fathers had feared.

Persephone Descending

Here in my lesser life I lie describing
the sun's sweep across a brilliant summer sky,
drawn up in such blue as I'm abandoned by.

It's conjured. Now I'm the slightest shadow
of his shadowed land;
step-child, the light of his left hand.

Here I am kept and kept from.
I bloom like poison in my ration of air,
shuddering as his boots scrape down the stairs.

Seasons clutch and fade and I turn
frumpy and devout—I am forgotten,
forgetting how, here to look on

and nod surprise. He has the last look out.
From my cinder bed,
in my chill-for-bones, I am blind,

bound to his gloom. I lie
under oceans, under rivers, under rain
and dream the world out of the dark, regained.

Jacquelyn Pope

LEPORE MUSTERS Noah Webster (1758–1813) as the first and foremost of the seven character sketches that constitute her new book, a Plutarchian cultural history of our national origins. The other characters include William Thornton (1759–1828), a West Indian planter who settled in America and promoted a "Universal alphabet" to facilitate communication between European and African languages. Sequoyah (ca. 1760–1843) was an uneducated but brilliant Cherokee silversmith who never learned English but developed an effective syllabary and writing system for his own native language. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1785–1860) pioneered in the education of the deaf by founding residential schools that developed American Sign Language. Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima (ca. 1762–1829) was a Southern slave who displayed literacy in Arabic to achieve celebrity, freedom, and a return to Africa. Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872) developed the world's first system of instantaneous communication over vast distances: the telegraph and Morse code. Alexander Graham Bell (1847–1922) improved upon the telegraph by inventing the telephone—and thought that he could improve upon Gallaudet by suppressing sign-language instruction among the deaf in favor of an alternative called "Visible Speech."

All seven experimented with symbolic systems that were designed to promote a sense of nationhood, usually American. Repeatedly playing on the double meaning of "character" as both personal quality and written symbol, Lepore describes her book as "a story about how a few early Americans tried to use letters and other characters—alphabets, syllabaries, signs, and codes—to strengthen the new American nation, to string it together with chains of letters and cables of wire." The seven also appeal to Lepore's talents as a teller of stories rich in cultural implication; she has been drawn to biographies "rich with irony and passion and a certain kind of flawed earnestness." Well-meaning but myopic, they are protagonists deeply plausible to our own times.

The seven lives reveal American history as an enduring tension between two versions of patriotism: one optimistic and universalist (we now call this "Wilsonian" after Woodrow Wilson), the other more pessimistic and inward (think Pat Buchanan). The former, derived from the Enlightenment, sought improved systems and technologies of communication designed to unify and to uplift people throughout the world, which generally meant rendering them more like Americans in their religion and politics. The latter expressed American fears that foreigners bore a cultural contagion best kept at a distance, and one of the methods for attaining such an immunity was by cultivating a linguistic uniformity that sharpened the distinction with all newcomers.

Lepore's biographical subjects varied considerably in their linguistic forms of nationalism. William Thornton most consistently expressed an enlightened (and naïve) universalism, offering his new alphabet as a means to world peace and global Christianity. Webster, Morse, and Bell gravitated toward the more pinched version of linguistic patriotism. Although they initially expressed or inspired universalist dreams, the three eventually became strident nativists and cranks, ever more alarmed by the passing years that brought old age to them and new waves of immigrant diversity to the nation.

Abd al-Rahman and Sequoyah, by contrast, never subscribed to American-led universalism. They practiced linguistic strategies that were conceived to defend the cultural separatism of their own people. By developing a Cherokee writing system, Sequoyah resisted the corrosive acculturation to American ways promoted by learning English. Favoring Cherokee traditionalism and isolation, Sequoyah willingly moved west—in contrast to his nation's mixed-blood, English-speaking leaders, who assimilated to American ways in the vain hope that acculturation would enable them to persist in their Georgia homeland in defiance of covetous white frontiersmen. To escape from American slavery, Abd al-Rahman displayed his Arabic literacy and pretended to a Christian zeal to convert his people—a pose that sent him back to Africa, where he could instead practice his devout Muslim faith. Neither an innovator nor a systematizer, Abd al-Rahman is the wild card in Lepore's deck, included for some literal and figurative color rather than for service to her argument.

By creating American Sign Language, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet also defied the pervasive nationalist pressure for linguistic uniformity. Prior to Gallaudet, deaf Americans seemed incapable of education. In Britain, during the eighteenth century, a few reformers tried to teach the deaf to lip-read, with limited success. More successful were the clusters of deaf people, in various countries, who developed their own local systems of hand signs. Following their cues, the French educator Charles-Michel de l'Épée developed a signing system that his students taught to Gallaudet. Adapting French Sign Language, Gallaudet created American Sign Language, and founded a residential school for the deaf in Hartford. Gallaudet's school and system vastly improved the ability of the deaf to communicate with one another and to learn from their teachers; but critics, including the educational reformer Horace Mann, blasted him for colluding in the linguistic distinction of the deaf from their fellow Americans, who rarely learned American Sign Language.

Although the deaf were relatively few, the notion of any linguistic nation within the larger republic appalled nationalists. Their fears found some confirmation in 1855, four years after Gallaudet's death,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when a deaf admirer, John J. Flournoy, proposed creating in the West a new state called Gallaudet. Although he was the scion of a wealthy planter, Flournoy had failed miserably in three races for Georgia's state legislature. Ambitious but frustrated, he sought his own state, limited to deaf people (more precisely, to white deaf people). "We will have a small republic of our own, under our sovereignty, and independent of all hearing interference," Flournoy proclaimed. He even insisted that the hearing children of deaf parents would have to leave his state of Gallaudet, a proposition that appalled almost everyone. Nothing came of Flournoy's implausible scheme other than to heighten ill-informed criticism of American Sign Language as the seed of separatism.

RATHER THAN POSE as blandly objective, Lepore holds—and shares—blunt opinions about her human characters. In particular, she despises Webster: "a failed schoolmaster, a passionate flutist, a lousy lawyer, an intriguing essayist, an inexhaustible lobbyist, a shrill editor, a pompous lecturer." He was, she concludes, "an arrogant, self-promoting pedagogue" and "a tight-lipped, supercilious, embittered patriarch." Aggrieved by prolonged exposure to Webster's pompous writings, Lepore cannot bear to concede his integrity and his insights. She depicts the more genial, cosmopolitan, and optimistic William Thornton as an admirable anti-Webster: "Thornton was worldly; Webster was not ... Thornton was expansive; Webster was not." Both men were early abolitionists, but Lepore splits hairs to celebrate Thornton while denigrating Webster: "Yet, if Webster concerned himself with the matter of slavery, he expressed no interest in African languages. And he never linked his antislavery sentiment to his work on spelling reform."

Lepore is much easier on Thornton, despite his Panglossian scheme to transport and to colonize freed American slaves in Africa. A logistical nightmare, a financial impossibility, and a moral travesty, colonization was bitterly opposed by most African Americans—and by Webster. He aptly blasted African colonization as "a flagrant act of injustice, inferior only to the first act of enslaving their ancestors." Given that he was far more right than Thornton on the big question, why fault Webster for failing to forge a tenuous link between anti-slavery and spelling reform? But in fairness to Lepore, anyone who has suffered through a committee meeting—in business, law, politics, or academia—will recognize how difficult it is to concede that the biggest jerks can occasionally have the best point.

Although far more appealing to modern sensibilities, Thornton, it has to be said, could be a fool. Smitten by the French Revolution, he excused its atrocities, writing a fawning letter to the dictator Robespierre: "In extraordinary cases you are warranted in the use of extraordinary means." With scant concern for practicality, Thornton later promoted a federal union of all nations in North and South America, with a capital on the Isthmus of Panama. Aside from designing the U.S. Capitol, Thornton accomplished little that endured. After it caused an initial sensation in 1793, his masterwork *Cadmus: Or, a Treatise on the Elements of Written Language* quickly faded from print and memory, while Webster's schoolbook and dictionary have persisted through multiple revisions to our own day. The lightweight Thornton may have been the nicer guy, but Webster mattered—and still matters—more.

LEPORE DELIGHTS IN irony, and she finds a trove of it in the life of Samuel F. B. Morse. A frustrated artist, Morse turned in 1832 to experiments in applying electromagnetism to communication, and to developing a coded system of dots and dashes keyed to the alphabet: the Morse code. An especially xenophobic nationalist, Morse meant for his telegraph and his code to remain military secrets sold to and held by the federal government to combat America's purported enemies—the Catholic powers of Europe. But the penny-pinching Congress balked, obliging Morse to sell his patent rights instead to private investors, to his immense benefit. A shrewd business partner and a voracious commercial demand spread the telegraph across the country and the Atlantic to Europe, making Morse immensely wealthy.

Many commentators, then as now, naïvely detected world peace and harmony in technological determinism. In 1858 an especially optimistic proponent of the telegraph boasted that the transatlantic cable "binds together by a vital cord all the nations of the earth. It is impossible that old prejudices and hostilities should longer exist, while such an instrument has been created for an exchange of thought between all nations of the earth." Poppycock, thought Morse, who dreaded foreigners, especially Catholics, as a menace to the American republic, which he conceived of as properly and perpetually Protestant. During the 1850s and 1860s, of course, the real danger to the Union came from within, from the highly Protestant Southern states wedded to slavery and to the English language. Nor was Morse satisfied when his telegraph became a military asset to the Union during the Civil War to suppress Southern secession, for the inventor despised Lincoln, defended slavery, and sympathized with the South. "Our country is dead," he gloomily observed in 1862. No linguistic technology, neither Morse's code nor Webster's schoolbook, could hold together a house divided, one half free and the other committed to slavery.

DURING THE 1860S, as the United States blew apart, a Scottish professor of elocution named Alexander Melville Bell developed a new thirty-four-character alphabet that he called "Visible Speech." Reviving Thornton's ambition, the system promised to express all of the sounds in every language to facilitate Christian missionaries and British imperialists around the globe. Bell's famous son, Alexander Graham Bell, adapted "Visible Speech" to teach the deaf to speak. Emigrating to Boston in 1871, the younger Bell also experimented with the telegraph to reproduce sounds, culminating in 1876 with the first telephone. The funding came primarily from Gardiner Greene Hubbard, the wealthy father of Mabel Hubbard, a young deaf woman who had become Bell's student and would become his wife. The Bell Telephone Company enriched the couple, enabling Bell to retire from business during the 1880s to devote his time to founding the National Geographic Society and to his interests in deaf education.

In old age, Bell succumbed to the dread that had haunted his predecessors Webster and Morse: that cultural divisions within the United States would widen to undermine the nation. Although he was patron to a geographical society that collected, packaged, and disseminated global information, Bell liked foreigners best at an exotic distance—where they could not breed with Americans. Although an immigrant, he felt superior to the majority who came to America from non-English-speaking lands. "The only hope for the American race," he wrote in 1920, "lies in the restriction of immigration."

Like most learned men of his generation, Bell fell hard for Social Darwinism and its affinities for scientific racism and eugenics. Despite his deaf wife and his commitment to deaf education, Bell worried that sign language isolated the deaf from other Americans and encouraged them to procreate with one another, which would culminate in "a deaf variety of the human race." Perhaps to prove his point, Bell took up as hobby the selective breeding of cats to produce a set of blue-eyed and white-furred cats who were deaf. And Bell preached against Gallaudet's system of teaching American Sign Language in distinct residential schools for the deaf. In 1913 he wrote: "I believe that,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in an English speaking country like the United States, the English language, *and the English language alone*, should be used as the means of communication and instruction." With the best intention but the worst judgment, Bell damaged for a generation the most effective modes of teaching the deaf.

In a brief epilogue, Lepore races from Bell to the digital age, where computers mediate communication. Rather than detail the processes by which our society moved from telephone to computer, she concludes with two contemporary characters, ubiquitous megamogul Bill Gates and Jeff Hawkins, who invented the Palm hand-held computer with its own alphabet trademarked as "Graffiti." Comfortable in an age of global American power, both commercial and military, Gates and Hawkins seem less interested in, or fearful for, the national project than their seven predecessors. Driven mainly to accumulate capital and to justify their profits, they vaguely ennoble their enterprises with the sonorities of Enlightenment universalism, benignly depicting computer-driven globalization as a great harmonizer of opportunity, democracy, and prosperity.

Rather than confront these claims, Lepore abruptly ends her book with the elegiac statement that in the "transformation from a 'republic of letters' to a 'digital economy,' we've replaced characters with numbers." Given Lepore's own flair with characters, let's hope that we have not. Indeed, the eloquent quirkiness of her book attests that her concluding sentiment is misleadingly ominous. And Lepore's success in founding and editing a stimulating Web magazine called *Common-place* reveals the creative possibilities for words in a medium defined by numbers.

This short book is smart and suggestive, but it is inconclusive. Its readers will enjoy an intriguing journey filled with many small gems of understanding, but they will gain little sense of the big picture—of the process and the destination in the changing modes of national communication and debate. In its tone and its method, Lepore's new book neither advances upon nor declines from the very high standard set in her extraordinary first book *The Name of War*, which appeared in 1998. That book offered a profound and often unsettling meditation on the nature and the narration of American war, employing as a prism a particular colonial conflict with Indians known as King Philip's War. By illuminating the shifting ways that Americans recalled and memorialized their victory, Lepore explored the technologies of memory and the codes of intergenerational communication, twin themes that led on to *A Is for American*.

In both books the style is atmospheric, offering flavor rather than argument, evocation instead of demonstration, anecdotes rather than data. Both offer extended personal essays built around historical personalities rather than conventional, analytical monographs devoted to change through time. Most readers will welcome Lepore's choices. Her distinctive style wears particularly well because she wastes no ink denigrating alternative modes of history or trumpeting her own innovations. Practicing instead of preaching, she avoids the canting self-celebration that distorts many other recent experiments in narrative history. But the novelty is gone; and the stylistic similarities of *The Name of War* and *A Is for American* suggest that Lepore has not yet fully realized the creativity that is the obvious promise of her work as a historian. ■

Stiflings

By Robert Boyers

The Melancholy of Resistance by László Krasznahorkai translated by George Szirtes

(New Directions, 314 pp., $25.95)

There is no single, standard Eastern European novel. Neither is there an archetypal Czech or Polish or Hungarian novel in terms of which ostensibly deviant forms may be assessed. The best books by Eastern European writers are spectacularly diverse; and the works that have appeared in the years following the fall of communism have been especially varied. Though it is tempting to believe that one or two aspects of particularly gripping masterpieces—a fondness for the grotesque or the apocalyptic, or an obsession with political tyranny—may serve as defining features of Eastern European writing generally, one need only think of the "exceptions" to conclude that they far outnumber the "standard" works.

For most American readers, Eastern European fiction has typically been associated with Czech or Polish writing, but in the last decade several Hungarian novelists have attracted enthusiastic attention. Among them are Peter Nadas, Tamas Aczel, Peter Esterhazy, and George Konrad, the last of whom first made his reputation here in the 1970s and remains a prodigious and resourceful writer. Now the first English-language publication of an acclaimed work by László Krasznahorkai permits us once again to consider, if only very briefly, whether the term "Hungarian novel" means anything more than "a work of fiction produced by a Hungarian writer." Like some but by no means all of the novels appearing from Hungary in recent years, *The Melancholy of Resistance* is intermittently retrospective, apocalyptic, and prophetic. It is concerned, at least in part, with the subordination of individual desire to the aims of a more or less official cultural and political apparatus, much as we would expect of a work produced in a nation just emerging from a long period of Communist domination. As in novels by Nadas and Aczel, the prose in Krasznahorkai's book is frequently labyrinthine, the sentences rolling on at great length. As in the novels of Esterhazy, there is in Krasznahorkai what John Banville has called a "stoic doctrine, a kind of *amor fati*." As, often, in the otherwise utterly different work of Konrad, the communicated sense of reality is oppressive, the task of reversing injustice and cruelty what Leszek Kolakowski has called "comically ... [and] obscenely unaccomplishable."

And yet to set Krasznahorkai's novel alongside the books of those others is to see at once how hopeless it is to read this unfamiliar work as a typical product of the Hungarian imagination or as a reflection of peculiarly Eastern European circumstances. Originally published in 1989, the novel little resembles any particular work by its author's more eminent contemporaries. It offers nothing of the tumultuous history of Hungarian communism, and none of the dispassionate, highly evocative documentary realism that distinguished the early work of Konrad. It is no wonder that W.G. Sebald, among others, sought to understand Krasznahorkai's work by

Robert Boyers is Tisch Professor of Arts and Letters at Skidmore College and editor of *Salmagundi*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assimilating it to a visionary tradition that is by no means strictly Eastern European.

Sebald proclaimed that *The Melancholy of Resistance* "is a book about a world into which the Leviathan has returned," though the book is decidedly not about the Leviathan, nor even about the impact of the Leviathan upon the world. The Leviathan, in Krasznahorkai's novel, is a dead whale, a thing, a carcass stuffed and exhibited in a traveling circus. It has, so far as we can tell, no satanic powers, surely no edifying properties, and no capacity to inspire in those who pay money to look at it any trace of spiritual or nihilistic reflection. If Melville's whale calls to mind ultimacies and abysses, signs and wonders, godhead and malignity, Krasznahorkai's whale inspires in the one character potentially equipped to take it in only a "happy stupor," while others—"who continued trudging compliantly around the whale in the stinking gloom—not only showed no signs of being similarly affected but gave the decided impression that the highly visible object of the advertisement was of limited interest." Though Sebald suggested that Krasznahorkai's novel is a visionary work and that the return of Leviathan is here a soul-making—or a soul-shattering—occasion, the intimations of apocalypse that are liberally deposited throughout *The Melancholy of Resistance* are so relentlessly anatomized and caricatured that in the end they seem no more than the eruptions of feverish, childish fantasies, and the novel itself, however reluctantly, a realistic work whose primary ambition is disillusionment rather than soul-making.

To be sure, Krasznahorkai toys with his reader, suggesting now and again that he is interested in the incomprehensible. Characters obsess about omens, "terrifying rumors," "mysterious" disasters. Ordinary folk speak of a "last judgment" and speculate upon "some vast murderous fury." When the circus arrives in the nondescript village where the action of the novel is set, we have reason to suspect that the featured attraction will prove to embody something fabulous, that ultimately a reckoning will emerge that is commensurate with the intensities of the hand-wringing expended on the creature's behalf. The insignificant little woman who, early in the novel, fantasizes about "the sort of creature who 'knew neither God nor man'" is but one in a chorus of excitable townspeople. The idiom of Krasznahorkai's novel is by turns apocalyptic, penitential, and overheated, as if very large and urgent matters were continuously at hand, and the fate of the soul itself hung in the balance.

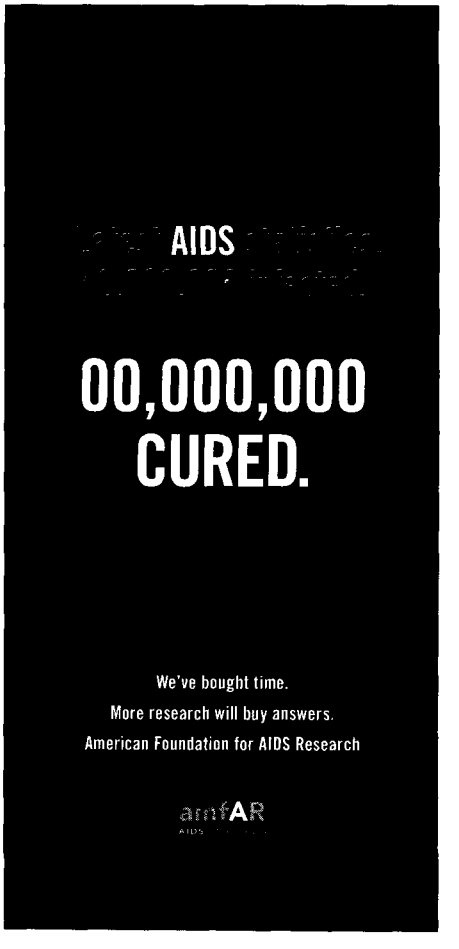
That the whale itself portends, in this novel, nothing so large is quickly apparent, despite the several noises contrived to suggest otherwise. Those who obsess about the "unfathomable and inconceivable," the "ever-spreading, all-consuming," are in fact so fearful and obsessive that it is impossible for any reader to view the world as they do. By the time the whale puts in its initial appearance, we are armored against the credulousness of the susceptible multitudes, and neither the "dead eyes" of the creature nor its "vast unmoving tongue" can cause us to invest in it a metaphysical aspect.

In spite of its Proustian sentences and its surrealist feints, Krasznahorkai's novel is in fact a rather elementary tale. A circus arrives in a small Hungarian town and precipitates a frenzy of mob violence. We soon see that the circus is more a pretext than a subject, though the action, such as it is, formally revolves around the mob and the citizens who incite, control, or otherwise respond to the rampaging chaos in the streets. Intrigues are mounted, personal conflicts are dramatized, political implications are bluntly spelled out. Everything seems small, provincial, the stakes significant only by the standards of a place too unimportant to create a stir in the world. Though destruction is wreaked upon the town and lives are lost, we are concerned principally with a few characters who are endowed with characteristic virtues and vices. These figures engage us in varying degrees, though they are static figures, their features writ large, and the action of the novel is designed to permit their features to stand clear and to boldly signify. Though Krasznahorkai bathes everything in a thick wash of darkness and dread, his intentions are all too obvious.

From the first, Krasznahorkai casts all of his characters as fundamentally unreliable witnesses. "To tell the truth," the narrator says, indicating that if we stick with him we shall certainly know what is what. But as for "them," well, the more one registers the rumors and the omens "referred to by a growing number of people," the more one notes all that "people simply assumed," the more one accepts that "they" are not ever to be trusted. In fact, not only are the things that "they" say set between quotation marks, but quotation marks are employed throughout the novel to set off hundreds of phrases, which are thereby singled out—very much in passing—to indicate the stock expressions without which ordinary consciousness would be bereft. When a woman is described as going to "'her well-earned sleep,'" we are invited to feel superior to the person who resorts to this consoling expression. A man "intoxicated with 'the smell of success'" is a man in thrall to a modest cliché and thus one of "them," where "they" are those who think with the assistance of ready-made tags and phrases. We are given to understand that the characters in the novel would resort to such terms if their inchoate sentiments were formulated in words.

Throughout the novel, in fact, extraordinary attention is paid to language itself. One character reflects that in his world "every sober word and thought confusingly lost its meaning," and "statements employing tropes such as 'as' and 'as if' had lost their cutting edge." Though virtually everyone in the novel is, in one degree or another, subjected to satire—and we are relentlessly detached even from the one or two likable figures—we are never permitted entirely to remove ourselves from "them." We remain, and we know that we remain, subject to the toils of language. This Krasznahorkai will not allow us to forget.

This is not to suggest that *The Melancholy of Resistance* is a book about language. In many ways it is a book about "them," where "they" are the human, all too human beings who are, with whatever exceptions, mostly out there, and not merely in small Hungarian villages. If Sebald is right about "the universality" of Krasznahorkai's vision, then "they" are a veritable gallery of everymen and everywomen, and the particulars, including the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hungarian place-names, serve simply to establish a creditable locale for actions that might erupt anywhere. The attention paid to language is, in this sense, an attention that might well be paid to any language rife with susceptibilities to cliché and deception. "They" are ridiculous, pathetic, frightening, delusional, and self-important not because they think and speak in a Hungarian idiom that betrays their inadequacy, but because they are, like human beings everywhere, inadequate. Their inadequacy is a fact of their lives. The evidence for it is everywhere.

ODDLY, MUCH THAT underlies the disposition and the behavior of characters in this novel is simply presented as "the facts" of the case. People are credulous because they are credulous. Others are rapacious or passive because they cannot but be what they are. The word "because" is itself obviously misleading here, suggesting that reason and logic might plausibly be summoned to order and clarify things. But, for all its tendency to argue with itself and to allow its primary characters to doubt their own conclusions, the novel tends more or less inexorably to assert that "everything out there actually was 'one damned thing piled on another.'"

The cold, fatalistic logic inherent in such a view is that "chaos really [is] the natural condition of the world," and that "even the words 'chaos' and 'outcome' are entirely redundant, there being nothing one can posit as their antitheses." In such a world, human beings can do nothing but reflect the situations that define them completely. They are creatures born to chaos and confusion, and chance alone would seem to determine how they behave at any given time. One temperament may be mild, another ferocious, and though there is no use in suggesting that they are one and the same, in the end it is probably safe to assume that the forces at work in any instance will remain largely obscure. Those who struggle to make sense of the ordinary chaos will be disappointed. They will come to regard themselves as foolish.

In Krasznahorkai's book, the ordinary chaos is principally embodied in those who are ordinary. These include the bland and the not-so-bland, the passive and the ambitious, men and women, public figures and private citizens. All are regarded, with virtually no exception, as fundamentally distasteful. The fearful petit-bourgeois Mrs. Plauf fusses over her idiotic knickknacks and fumes about the "foul desires" of every stranger she meets, every one of them in her view "coarse," "degenerate," disgracefully "unshaven." So revolting is this primly disapproving exemplar of the ostensibly decent and orderly that we all but accede to the instinct of Mrs. Eszter, who, on a visit to Mrs. Plauf, is overcome by "the ever more intense temptation to crush one of those little knickknacks in her enormous palm, to snap it as one would the neck of a chicken." It is not that the visitor herself is in any way appealing. Krasznahorkai leaves little doubt that she is shallow, cruel, and ponderously self-important; but we cannot but share with her a disdain for "the cosy comfiness, the stolid air of inactivity, the treacly prettiness of this 'filthy little viper's nest'" that is the habitation of Mrs. Plauf, whose "wispy tulle curtains" and "lace doilies" and—"behind the glass of the showcase"—"straggling sentimental novels with their hot, sticky, airless contents" are made, like their possessor, to inspire nausea and contempt.

But if the "'idle pleasures and feeble desires'" of Krasznahorkai's little people invariably inspire a mild disgust, so too do the strivings of the more aggressive and worldly figures in the novel. These are persons whose primary motive is power, who in the pursuit of their goals will stop at nothing. The most notorious of these figures is Mrs. Eszter, who may well call to mind Flaubert's Homais. Like Flaubert's despicably "disinterested" pharmacist, she is, in her view, an Enlightenment figure as resistant to "romantic literary nonsense" as to ordinary fellow feeling. Few characters in recent fiction are at once so repulsive and so vividly drawn as this behemoth, so apparently committed to "civic improvement" and "'the elevating passion of communal action'" while holding in contempt the idealists and the long-suffering, the innocent and the genuinely communitarian. Though most of Krasznahorkai's characters are weak, or stupid, and easily swayed by demagogy, Mrs. Eszter is distinguished chiefly by her cunning, the intensity of her determination, her brutish self-sufficiency, and her willingness to use others to forward her ambitions.

A landscape largely dominated by insipidity, brutishness, and insensibility will soon seem artificial, a system rather than an insight; and this is a risk that Krasznahorkai courts. Frequently we feel that an idea—chaos, the war of all against all, the futility of good intentions—has taken hold of the writer's imagination and made of it a willing accomplice in the promotion of another of these ideas. The problem is that none of these is in itself as complex or as interesting as Krasznahorkai apparently assumes. Like other currently fashionable ideas—all of human life as a struggle for power, for example—"chaos" announces that anything is possible and also that no other view of things is conceivable. If everything is reduced to "chaos" or "power" or "disorder," then anything resembling an exception must seem merely eccentric, irrelevant, a delusion of the irredeemably credulous or underdeveloped. Krasznahorkai's novel has the airless feel of a work with a settled view of things. Its brilliant translator George Szirtes rightly describes it as "a slow lava flow of narrative, a vast, black river of type," but the narrative, with all fits and starts, is constrained to flow in one direction only. The author makes no allowance for the possibility that he may be mistaken. For him, everything inevitably confirms what is already known.

IN THIS SENSE, the idea of "resistance" can itself be no more than a conditioned, mostly pathetic fiction in this novel, stirring only insofar as it suggests that desolation may take several forms, some of them more edifying than others. The so-called resistance to which the book's title refers is, in fact, never mounted. It has no active component, though it is vaguely discernible in an activity of mind that never threatens to issue in anything effectual. The resistant minds belong to two characters, one an apparent half-wit or dreamer named János Valuska, the other Gyorgi Eszter, once the director of the local music academy and the husband of the behemoth Mrs. Eszter, more recently an illusionless eccentric who has withdrawn from the world and remained for some years in his bed. Though both of these characters circulate in the village—Mr. Eszter for the first time in years—and both have opportunities to interact with others, neither offers any prospect of significant resistance to the chaos that they encounter or, indeed, to the forces responsible for fomenting and orchestrating the chaos. Krasznahorkai invests his exceptional characters with qualities that endear them to us, but his attraction to them is sentimental. He does not require of them that they be equal to their better notions or their more generous instincts. As with the other, very different characters in this novel, all that is required of these two exceptions is that they confirm the general condition to which all must submit.

Clearly "the melancholy of resistance," as an expression at once poignant and stirring, may owe its poignance to the fact that those who resist do not have the strength or the resources to accomplish their noble purpose. The expression would then refer to the activity of persons who know better than to expect success but persist in spite of the odds arrayed against them. Such resisters would presumably believe that, in time, their efforts might be seen to stand for something important, and that, eventually, conditions might somehow improve. That is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often what we find in political novels, where principled revolt frequently takes shape with no prospect of imminent success, but with every sense that the willingness to resist or to revolt will itself prove indispensable in the future, when conditions may somehow call forth a more effective, more comprehensive, better organized, less eccentric resistance.

The resisters in Krasznahorkai's novel are not at all principled or deliberate in their disaffection. The youthful Valuska, for all his "angelic" disposition, is depicted as "trapped ... in a bubble," moving about "'blindly and tirelessly ... with the incurable beauty of his personal cosmos' in his soul." Hungry for approval and affection, he allows himself to be the genial butt of jokes and ridicule, and passes through life with "no sense of proportion" and with "a sad incomprehension." Though he is dimly troubled by what he sees, he generally sees very little, and he is exemplary only in the sense that he vaguely longs for a goodness and beauty others seem not to miss. When he is caught up in the mob hysteria that sweeps the village, he is unable to pull himself away, and though he commits no evil deed, wracked as he is with terror, he is in every way frozen, useless, pathetic: "he wished to defend the person being beaten," Krasznahorkai writes, "and ... to be the person administering the beating." Aware, briefly, that he has spent his life in a "forest of illusions," he can do nothing but register the degree to which the "carnival of hatred" erupting around him is not what he had ever previously had in mind, though its claim upon him is impossible to deny.

Whatever one is inclined to make of Valuska, it is clear that in some respects he stands apart from "them" and yet represents no viable principle of resistance to evil or disorder. Innocence, in this book, is not a sufficient standard or ambition. It may well be that the writer intended to make of Valuska someone more promising, but saw no way to embody that promise in the figure he conceived. More likely, he simultaneously wished and did not wish to embody in the world of his novel some more effectual power of resistance. In the end Valuska serves, like everything else in the novel, to say that no meaningful resistance is possible, not here.

What might, in some other novel, suggest some stoic moral authority in this work never rises above a bleak absolutism of negation whose specific content is avoidance rather than encounter. No more than Valuska is Eszter an authentically resisting figure. He lives more or less exclusively in his head, and his several improvised notions come to us with no moral urgency, no sense that he must change his life to be equal to them. Like all of the ideas summoned in Krasznahorkai's novel, Eszter's ideas are entertained without real seriousness, and we feel that they can be dropped or renounced as abruptly as they are taken up.

In short, Krasznahorkai's heart is neither in resistance nor in melancholy. His *alienés* are odd, disconnected, plausibly imagined, but incidental to the primary energies of the novel. These energies are satirical, though the targets of the satire yield all too readily to derision. The petit-bourgeois figures in the novel are predictably small, selfish, silly, smug. The mob behaves as mobs will, blindly, violently, badly. Corruption is located, as it so often is, in the most powerful and trusted members of the community. The police chief is a boor and a barbarian with gamy sexual appetites, a man who mistreats his children and drinks himself into a stupor to avoid responsibility for the riots that engulf the town. Everywhere the portents portend the predictable, and even the inexorable surges of Krasznahorkai's manic, intensely patterned prose cannot but move the narrative where the author has determined it will go.

There are, to be sure, extraordinary lusters in the writing. Much of the time we allow ourselves to be delighted by turns of phrase and idiom that lend provisional excitement to a forward momentum whose destination is never in doubt. There is no reticence, no austerity in this writer's repertoire, but never do we long for less or imagine that in opting for abundance or superfluity he has abandoned meaning. If anything, there is too much meaning, too much insistence upon omen and harbinger and metaphor. Krasznahorkai's powers of verbal invention are prodigious, but the verbal energy is too often lavished upon a bleak dogmatism, harnessed to irreversible patterns of orchestrated chaos or decline.

At the center of the novel is a transparently specious campaign for "moral rearmament" engineered by the unspeakably cynical and manipulative Mrs. Ezster; but there is nothing remotely credible in this campaign, no effort to imagine what a legitimate "moral rearmament"—if such were possible—might entail. Neither is there, as in Robert Musil's handling of the "Collateral Campaign" in *The Man Without Qualities*, an effort to get inside the misguided idealism of any thoughtful participant, or to describe the conflicts of purpose and vision that divide supporters. In Krasznahorkai, "missionary endeavor" is automatically known to be laughable, whatever its object, and those who can be moved by words like "vigilance," "common sense," and "solidarity" are of course those most apt to be moved by bad poetry and appeals to "hearth and home." Caricature is piled upon caricature in the setting up of a satire whose purpose is mainly to certify that idiots are idiots, that the spoils inevitably belong to the cunning and the brutal, whose one obvious virtue is their inexhaustible contempt for sentimentality.

And so we wonder, at last and again, whether there may be in this novel something more. Is there, perhaps, a specifically Hungarian or Eastern European dimension to this novel that might lift it beyond the status of a pessimistic virtuosity? Is the novel a belated satire on the several species of moral rearmament so often promoted by tyrannical regimes in the name of socialism or people's democracies? Perhaps Krasznahorkai anticipated, with the revulsion everywhere inscribed in his narrative, that the successor regimes about to replace the moribund Communist governments in the Soviet bloc would be every bit as corrupt and vicious as their citizens had some reason to expect. But such speculation is wasted here, where the particulars are generic, the forms of idiocy, corruption, and betrayal are "universal," the revealed patterns of inculcation and subordination are typical, and every outcome is ordained. Whatever the national or regional origins of the worldview that rules this novel, the schematic and overdetermined playing out of the various conflicts is such as to make its worldview seem inconsequential. ■

Fellowships

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University awards 40 fully funded residential fellowships each year designed to support post-doctoral scholars, scientists, writers, and artists of exceptional promise and demonstrated accomplishment. Visit www.radcliffe.edu for more information. Applications must be postmarked by October 1, 2002.

Radcliffe Application Office • 34 Concord Avenue • Cambridge, MA 02138 • 617-496-1324 tel. • 617-495-8136 fax • fellowships@radcliffe.edu

RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

You deserve the best in love, too.

To find the best—for life-long romance, mixed doubles or just fun and excitement—visit *www.TheSquare.com*: the largest exclusive database of students and graduates of the world's 23 top schools.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Just Buy It

ON A BLAZING AFTERNOON A few weeks ago, I hopped the Metro to the Capitol to see the *Marie Claire* brides. There were about 30 of them, stuffed into in an odd assortment of white gowns, sweating not only from the heat but also from the difficulty of moving around in yards of trailing fabric, herded by photographers and handlers. Some of the dresses fit well. Others slid off the shoulder or flopped around the waist. One male protester in chunky sandals took a wrong step and, *gazzip*, we heard the awful tearing of a train underfoot. The bride looked down at her trod-on train and barely shrugged. These weren't blushing brides. They were drooping brides.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS QUASI-matrimonial exercise was to commemorate the 1999 killing of Gladys Ricart by her ex-boyfriend on her wedding day and, thus, draw attention to domestic violence. The protesters, organized by *Marie Claire* in conjunction with domestic-abuse activists and bused down from New York, marched in their nuptial finest to the Capitol, where they posed for photographs holding large red and white posters announcing "THE MARIE CLAIRE MARCH." Their political agenda was to convince Congress to increase funding for domestic violence programs. To register their anger, the brides rang hand-held bells—an incongruous touch given that their protest signs read, "WEDDING BELLS DON'T SOUND THE END OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE."

TALK ABOUT SYNERGY: LEADING THE parade was Salma Hayek, *Marie Claire*'s October cover girl to be and star of the upcoming film *Frida*, about grrl power's favorite poster child, Frida Kahlo. It turns out every celebrity who appears in *Marie Claire* is issued a "celebrity challenge" to do something "out there in the real world," according to Executive Editor Stacy Morrison. Hayek chose the march. This was unusual—only two celebs have chosen to do something political since *Marie Claire* began publishing in the United States eight years ago. (More typically, actress Hilary Swank, a former gymnast, joined Cirque de Soleil for a day; Cameron Diaz built a garden for a school in Los Angeles.) The arrangement's rationale, as Morrison explained, is to catch the stars performing an unusual activity. Then a writer types up a profile around the stunt and—*ta da*—you have a head-above-the-rest peek at celebrity lives. How's that for feminist activism?

THE TIMING OF HAYEK'S EVENT COULD hardly have been worse: In these times of war and recession, no one is likely to pay much attention to several dozen bell-ringing pseudobrides. Still, that really didn't matter because the demonstration's real purpose wasn't social change; it was marketing—specifically, convincing *Marie Claire* readers that in addition to giving us tighter tummies and making us savvier shoppers, the magazine also renders us politically active. This is progress, of a sort: Thirty years ago, when *Ms.* magazine was born, it was a struggle to get anyone, women included, to talk about domestic violence (or any other women's issue), and we can pat the movement on the back for bringing such subjects to light. Indeed, *Marie Claire*'s readers give the magazine's serious articles high marks. But as their favorites they always rank those articles about how to get that must-have purse on the cheap. I guess that's what they really mean by "grrl power."

THIS KIND OF FEMINIST CONSUMERism is seductive, since it tells you that the everyday activities of being a modern American woman—reading a magazine or buying lipstick or sneakers—qualifies you for feminist sisterhood. Many women have indeed made the world better by participating in Avon's "Breast Cancer Crusade," which between 1993 and 2001 raised a net $165 million for breast-cancer-related causes, according to company tallies. But what are we to make of the upcoming fall campaign that features "the limited edition Avon Kiss Goodbye to Breast Cancer Lipsticks, ... [that] come packaged in an elegant, pearlized pink case, symbolic of the breast cancer cause, and are inspirationally named, such as Courageous Coral, Crusade Rose and Determined Red"? This moral masquerade—selling us on the Avon brand in the guise of a higher calling—always feels more than a tad corrupt. Two weeks ago, in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of Title IX, newspapers carried an ad presenting the "thoughts and feelings of many women": "Sport taught me that I have two options in life: either to believe in myself unconditionally or just throw in the towel when things get tough"; "It minimized the insecurities and self-consciousness that too many girls get paranoid and neurotic about"; and so on. Pure feminist jargon, running on the back page of *The New York Times*' sports section. The only sign of a hidden agenda was the miniscule Nike Swoosh embedded in the text. Indeed, Nike has presumably benefited as much from Title IX as female athletes themselves. Forget about "Just do it." Just buy it.

AND NOW ADVERTISERS CAN. YOU HAVE to hand it to *Ms.* For twelve years the voice of the feminist movement survived without advertising. In the first ad-free issue, in 1990, Gloria Steinem celebrated the move as natural for "the only women's magazine that didn't supply what the ad world euphemistically describes as 'supportive editorial atmosphere' or 'complementary copy.'" Writer Robin Morgan, who took over as editor that same year, told *USA Today*, "It's the *Ms.* that we always wanted to be but couldn't." So it's more than a little ironic that the magazine that once celebrated its independence will now accept ads again, as a result of its recent sale to the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). That a feminist advocacy magazine like *Ms.* has traded in its journalistic stripes to become the house organ of a feminist advocacy group may sound unremarkable. But the switch has already changed *Ms.*'s tune. "*Ms.* had always been envisioned as a movement publication," Steinem told the *Los Angeles Business Journal* at the time of the sale last year. "Its profits should go back to the movement." Eleanor Smeal, head of the FMF and former head of the National Organization for Women, offered this unintentionally revealing view: "I could write the whole damn thing for a year without moving." So much for the *Ms.* they always wanted to be.

GIVEN THE ERSTWHILE PROMINENCE of *Ms.* magazine, which at its peak in 1976 reached 500,000 readers and served as the bible for feminists everywhere, it's more than a little sad that its sale has been met with relative silence. You know things are bad when one of the few mentions is a knock from *The Nation*. "Does this reflect hard times for feminism itself?" the weekly asked in January, "[*Ms.*] magazine has had a decade that has been shaky at best, coinciding with a period in which many feminists have seen the dwindling of the political movement." Perhaps that's why *Ms.* has spent the first two issues under its new ownership reprinting highlights from past issues. But don't worry. Feminist activism has a future. A second Brides' March is planned for New York on September 26, the anniversary of Ricart's slaying. *Marie Claire* has already collected some 50 wedding gowns for the event. "Kleinfeld has been just wonderful," Morrison told me. Wonderful.

SARAH BLUSTAIN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that's life

A New Online-only Column by Michelle Cottle

"For Adults Only"
Are loony anti-gay conservatives making sense for once?

"Tree Shrugger"
When did our president become a throw-up-your-hands-and-wait-for-disaster fatalist?

"Profiles in Stupidity"
Will the intelligence community find religion?

Sometimes Michelle will surprise you.
Sometimes she will enrage you.
Always, though, she will make you think.

NEW REPUBLIC

Wednesdays, ONLY at
The New Republic Online
www.tnr.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED